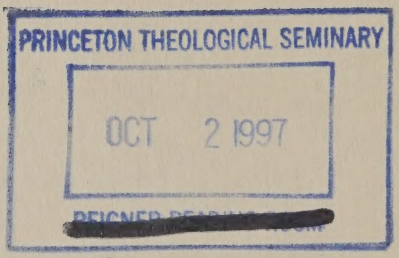
WORSHIP TRAINING FOR PRIMARY CHILDREN

CLARA BEERS BLASHFIELD



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MY BOOK — Anna L. DeRose.

WORSHIP TRAINING FOR PRIMARY CHILDREN

By
CLARA BEERS BLASHFIELD

A Textbook in the Standard Course in Leadership Training, outlined and approved by the International Council of Religious Education

SPECIALIZATION SERIES

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TO

MARGARET ALICE AND HER DADDY,

MY TWO COMPANIONS WHO HAVE HELPED ME MOST

TO A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE

MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE

OF WORSHIP,

THIS BOOK IS LOVINGLY DEDICATED

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

In the field of leadership training a number of evangelical denominations and state councils are co-operating through the International Council of Religious Education in a systematic effort to prepare teachers and leaders more adequately for the responsibility of leading and teaching. Among the objectives of leadership training adopted by the co-operating groups are the following: (1) that the teachers and leaders in our church schools shall be as well prepared, grade by grade, as are the teachers in the public schools; (2) that the minimum training required of teachers and leaders shall be at least that represented by a Standard Leadership Diploma.

The Standard Leadership Training Curriculum, as planned by the co-operating denominations and approved by the International Council, is organized on the basis of subject units, each representing not less than ten periods of study and discussion. The successful completion in a recognized training agency of twelve of these units as a minimum is necessary to secure a Standard Leadership Diploma. Of the twelve units, nine are required and three are elective. Of the nine required units six are general units and three are specialization units. Specialization depends upon the department of the church school in which the leader or teacher is engaged.

"Worship Training for Primary Children" is in the field of Primary Department specialization. Of the four specialization units, three are required and one is

elective. This subject is one of the elective units. The textbook deals primarily with the work of the departmental superintendent and the teachers and leaders who are leading and training primary children in Christian worship. It treats such fundamental topics as the meaning of worship in child life; atmosphere for worship; building programs of worship; and the use of music and pictures, song, scripture, and story material, and prayer in worship.

Textbooks of the Specialization Series are prepared under the general supervision of the Editorial and Educational Committee representing the denominations that co-operate in the Leadership Training Publishing Association, an organization formed for the specific purpose of the publication of the textbooks required for the leadership training curriculum. Editors, educational secretaries, publishers, and co-operating denominations, through this medium of co-operation, produce the textbooks of the Specialization Series for use in denominational and interdenominational agencies of training. Textbook writers are chosen on the basis of experience and training in the field of specialized training with which the textbook deals.

Worship Training for Primary Children will be welcomed by leaders and teachers in children's work as a discussion of one of the most important subjects in the religious education of children.

Editorial and Educational Committee,
Leadership Training Publishing Association.

CHAPTER I

THE MEANING OF WORSHIP IN CHILD LIFE

"Up to me sweet childhood looketh,
Heart and mind and soul awake,
Teach me of thy ways, O Father,
Teach me for sweet childhood's sake.
In their young hearts soft and tender
Guide my hand good seed to sow,
That its blossoming may praise Thee,
Praise Thee, wheresoe'er they go." [1]

THE primary aim of religious education is character development, in which worship plays an important part. While the acquisition of right knowledge is very necessary in character training, the formation of desirable attitudes and habits is of greater significance. Constant improvement of these, and expanding ability to live according to our Christian standards, practically determine the child's spiritual growth. The curriculum of religious education, to meet his needs, consists of much more than certain subject matter to be covered; it includes projects in living, by means of which the child may rise to a growing sense of social and spiritual values; it provides for an ever-increasing consciousness of the heavenly Father, and for a finer appreciation of Jesus as one who has shown us God's plan and desires for us; but also it must afford opportunity for *increased* control of conduct that accords with Christian standards of living. Growth in Christian character and in the controls of conduct requires constant practice in Chris-

[1] "Mother's Morning Prayer," Anonymous, in *Child Life In Poetry*, by John Greenleaf Whittier. Houghton Mifflin Company, Publishers. Used by permission.

tian living. This means that there must be ample provision for opportunities of choice in such experiences of child life as sharing, truth-telling, obedience, fair-play, and co-operation. As teachers and parents endeavor to lead boys and girls in their every-day experiences, they attempt to discover how best to help them find satisfaction in having acted wisely and well, and to aid them in forming habits of thought that will make doing right the most desirable thing. Of the many elements that enter into the religious development of an individual, that profoundly affect the formation and growth of the motives for right conduct, no element is of greater or more lasting value than is worship; in fact, it is central in an effective curriculum of religious education. This fact the teacher of primary children must understand as she provides for them the various types of child activity. Emotional changes such as may take place during music or picture study, in listening to a story, through poetry appreciation or through prayer, are important in character development just as certainly as are mental and motor types of activity. Since an all-around development of the child is highly desirable, since growth comes about only through the activity of the learner, it would be very unwise not to recognize as necessary and provide for our children suitable training in worship.

Child's Idea of God

Christlikeness in character is dependent upon the development of Christian ideas about God. Christian worship, therefore, must have as its first requisite such a concept of God as will lead into those relationships with God and man which we hold to be uniquely Christlike. This concept has always come from experience, and,

therefore, as we work with primary children we must be careful to provide for them worship experiences in which right ideas about God are basic.

We should not assume that the primary child holds the Christian thought of God. We should endeavor to discover what his concept is, and attempt to aid him as best we can to think of God as a kind, loving heavenly Father. His ideas of God have been gleaned from answers given him to oft-repeated questionings, chance conversations he has overheard, the tone of voice, or glances which he has interpreted in his own way, as well as from direct teaching. The emotional content of his worship depends so largely upon the way he thinks of God that it is quite essential that we endeavor to help him to the Christian view.

The ideas of God held by children differ widely. Occasionally a child thinks of God as a magic worker who can perform mysterious tricks. Sometimes he is conceived as one who may be cajoled into doing much if we but say the right word. Frequently the child believes that God will be greatly displeased if we omit certain formulas, that he demands certain conventional rubrics from us. The child who knows him as a God of love, a kind and just and merciful Friend and Companion, will experience very different emotions in worship from the child who prays to a God of vengeance, a God who has special favorites, upon whom only he bestows his blessings.

The Need of Training. To know God is not a matter of a moment. The child gains his best idea of God when he has been provided with contacts through which to gain experience of loving and being loved, forgiving and being forgiven. We cannot so well understand what we are told about God unless we have acted in a

way that corresponds with the picture we are given of him. The child who, even in play, has acted the part of a loving father is better able because of that experience to know God. The little girl acts or plays the part of caring for her doll or her pets; and, in knowing herself as the one who cares for the pets and dolls dependent upon her, she can better understand and know One who cares for all.

"I do love you, mother," said Mary one evening as she was putting her dolly to bed, "but I guess I really love my dolly best of all, for she is my own baby, you see, and she needs me so."

It was easier for Mary's mother to give her little girl a truer idea of God because the child had behaved in a way to correspond with the picture she had been given of the heavenly Father. A child's idea of God is indeed a vital factor in the process of learning to worship.

Alice had finished her evening prayer and song. She had thanked the Father for her happy day, for her school, for friends, and most of all for mother and daddy. After the prayer she sat down upon her bed in a meditative mood. At last she spoke, "I do love you, mother, but, of course, I love God best, for if it hadn't been for God, I wouldn't have you, would I?" It was a natural, normal situation, in which the child had grown up with the right idea of God. Alice had not thought of God as a big policeman spying on little children and trying to punish them whenever possible. She had always thought of him as the kind Father who provides for us every good thing.

Expression Natural to Childhood

True worship is spontaneous; it is derived from and related to life's experiences. We should seek for this

naturalness, for then worship becomes of great value to the development of character. Normal, natural expression reveals inner growth of attitudes toward God and toward a child's associates, and makes evident present knowledge or ideas about God and life in general. The child who possesses a high concept of God, when feeling unusually happy and thankful will spontaneously address the heavenly Father in prayer, as he asks his earthly father for help or thanks him for something.

"Thank you, daddy, for playing that beautiful music that tells about the springtime," said six-year-old Donald to his father, who during the evening meal had chosen to use the record, "Spring Song," by Mendelssohn.

To Donald, who from earliest childhood had learned through example and through direct teaching to enjoy and appreciate the things that were done for him, and who, thus early, was learning some of the joys and satisfactions of expressing verbally his appreciations, it became simple and natural for him to say "Thank you" to the heavenly Father. One can understand the naturalness and the eagerness with which Donald said one evening to the Father: "I do love my little garden, God; and I made it all myself. Thank you, dear heavenly Father, for the sunshine that is helping my seed-babies to grow, and thanks for the rain too. Amen."

God is very near and very real to a primary child; and the child can talk to him as naturally as though he were a visible instead of an unseen Companion, Friend, and Father.

Louise had heard an interesting story at school. In the story one character had deceived her mother. As

Louise talked to God that evening she remarked: "I'm so sorry that Maude deceived her mother. She should have told her the real truth, but she didn't, at least that's the way the story was written. And, O God, I am sorry that Maude didn't tell the truth." The natural conversational tone used was in itself indicative of the friendship and companionship Louise had found with the heavenly Father. How naturally this friendship grows under careful guidance!

Creative Effort. Growth of character is closely related to individual creative effort. Worship should so far as possible be the child's creative expression, that it may have the maximum influence upon growing life. We can scarcely expect a normal continuous growth in relationships with the heavenly Father unless we provide for the child's own creative expression. A very little encouragement is necessary, for most children simply and naturally do create.

The little family had driven into the country and out beyond the forest preserves. Evelyn had seemed to marvel at the majestic grandeur of the mighty forests. Daddy spoke of how much beauty God has given us. It was then that Evelyn burst into praise. In a clear sweet voice she sang:

> "Oh, the beautiful trees, the wonderful trees,
> How thankful I am to God for the trees."

The song was sung over and over. It was taken up by mother and daddy, who joined their little girl in praise to the Creator for trees.

With guidance, the primary child may be led to see God in all his creation and to recognize him as the Father of all his creatures. We can easily connect the song of a bird with God; and when the child recog-

nizes the song as an expression of God, he worships God. Feeling the greatness and goodness of God, he must be led to express himself in some way. Expression is the fundamental law of growth and growth means increased sensitivity. We may help him to become sensitive to feelings of devotion and praise, being always certain to make provision for some means through which these feelings may find natural expression. If feelings are to become permanent attitudes, they must be expressed. Religious feelings are stirred in various ways, a beautiful sunshiny day in early spring, buds just bursting into bloom, the joyousness of giving, or the doing of some act of service. In these and in numerous other ways the child may have a religious experience; and when he has this experience, our duty is to encourage him to give expression to his feelings. The particular form or forms the expression may take obviously will depend upon many factors, and will not always be creative on the part of the child, but should always be natural.

Forms of Expression

We frequently speak of the art of worship. Mendelssohn once defined art as the carrying forward of the beautiful, obscurely recognized by feeling until it became the true and the good. He considered the aim of art to be moral perfection. According to this artist's conception of the meaning of art, we may indeed consider worship as an art. Worship is truly the carrying forward of the beautiful, of the higher, finer, better thoughts and feelings, and these finally do become the true and the good. Beauty comes from God and beauty in its highest sense is truth.

To be an artist there must be more than experience

and feeling—there should be a desire, and some ability to express that experience and feeling.

Singing. Singing is one of the most effective avenues through which the child may express his feelings of love, praise, or gratitude. Music was the primitive language; it is a universal language, and it is said to be the language of the emotions. Through music, then, one should be able truly to worship. In singing, each child may have a part. That song may become a true natural expression, all songs used should express children's thought. The thoughts expressed in such a song as "He Cares For Me"[2] or "Can a Little Child Like Me,"[3] are illustrations of this type of primary song.

Instrumental Music and Pictures. These art paths toward God often unify the thinking of a group, as do, of course, other forms of expression; but one of the unique possibilities in music, as a preparation for worship or as a material of worship, is its ability to do this thing. Through music children may be brought to recognize something of that great unity which pervades the world of thought and matter. In hearing or seeing the beautiful there is at times an almost unconscious realization of the presence of God. "Beauty is really a manifestation of the perfection of God."[4] A religious experience has often come through the avenue of sight, the effect of some suggestive attitude portrayed in a picture perhaps, and it may also come through music. This is often true with adults, and may be true with children when using music, which through past training has come to be meaningful to them.

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[2] Frances Weld Danielson and G. W. Conant. *Songs for Little People.*

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] Herman Harrell Horne. *Psychological Principles of Education*, p. 336. The Macmillan Company, Publishers. Used by permission.

Story, Poetry, and Informal Conversation. A religious experience sometimes comes into being through the avenue of appreciation of some beautiful deed as portrayed in story form. In this there may be no outward, but a very real inward expression. The story may be used occasionally in a department service of worship, and more frequently in small groups.

Scripture. The use of carefully selected Scripture verses that through rich and varied associations have become meaningful, affords another means of expression in worship. Only material that is within the experience and understanding of the children can be of any great value as a means of expression in worship.

Prayer. Prayer is the heart of worship. Through prayer the group may be led into direct and intimate fellowship with the Father. Through social prayer, the child may be brought "into the wider fellowship of a worshiping group of children his own age."[5]

Offering. Children readily learn that they may thank God by bringing him their gifts, by sharing with him in helping provide for others. They may learn that giving service as well as money gifts may be an offering —an act of worship. Our aim should be to stimulate the child's desire to give, to train in regular and proportionate giving, and to help him find the joy of giving, recognizing always that the chief value of any offering is the effect produced upon the child.

A Social Act

The social nature of Christianity makes necessary social worship. Individual characteristics are largely due to social influence, and Christian traits therefore

[5] Luther Allan Weigle and Henry Hallam Tweedy, *Training the Devotional Life*, p. 280. Copyright, The Pilgrim Press, Publishers. Used by permission.

need, for their continued growth, Christian social stimulation. Psychologists tell us that attitudes are usually acquired in our social contacts. It is when with others that we are apt to take on or change our manner of thinking and our attitudes toward others. Worship is therefore most useful in Christian character education when it becomes a social activity.

In social prayer the child finds himself with a group of other worshipers who have gained a sense of unity through listening together and through common participation; and he gains a sense of membership in a group as well as an ever-increasing and developing sense of the highest spiritual values. We should not, however, lose sight of the great importance of the child's individual prayer life and should endeavor as best we can to help him in it.

The Meaning and Significance of Worship

We have seen how worship as a type of religious experience enters into character formation in religious education. We will now more closely examine worship to see what it is and something more of its value in the lives of primary children.

Appreciation of God as Creator. Attitudes of wonder and awe concerning forces asleep in little bulbs, the lovely colors of a rainbow, the gift of the new baby brother, are natural to a primary child. These wonder-worship emotions when fostered, may result in gratitude to God, the Creator, and subsequently, in an inner development of character. When God is recognized in the beauty of the flower, in the joyous bird note, or in the singing brook, there is a tendency for fellowship with him and for life to conform to his will and purpose. As the goodness and greatness of God are dis-

covered, an appreciation for him grows, and there may develop a desire to do his will and to be like him in bringing happiness and joy to others. This is the desirable outcome of worship. Possibly to make a sick child happy with a lovely flower would please the heavenly Father. Out of these natural wonder-worship attitudes toward God as Creator may grow a sense of being a part of his creation and of belonging to his family. Worship may then become a means by which the child seeks help in living as a member of God's family. It is now that devotedness or worship of him may have its origin. "Devotions are the outgoings of the heart in devotedness to God with a sense of God's devotedness to us."[6]

An increasing sense of our responsibility as members of his family should be nurtured. Desires and purposes can best be fostered by means of innumerable experiences in which co-operation with God is carried out in various forms of helpfulness.

Co-operation with God. Worship has always been an effort on the part of man to live harmoniously in co-operation with God's will. True, the worship has often degenerated into selfishness, but in our Christian religion it is an effort to conform to God's will and to co-operate fully in his purposes as revealed to us through Christ.

"Worship is that phase of religious experience in which the individual comes to know God, comes to know himself, and seeks to become identified with the plan of God, not only for his own life, but for the world as well."[7]

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[6] Gerrit Verkuyl, *Devotional Leadership*, p. 1. Fleming H. Revell Company, publishers. Used by permission.

[7] George Herbert Betts and Marion O. Hawthorne, *Method in Teaching Religion*. Published by The Abingdon Press. Used by permission.

Even a child is not too young to learn that he has his part to do and that God depends upon him. It is essential that primary children learn that God provides for all and takes care of us, but that in order to do so he needs our help, our co-operation. He gives us parents and teachers, who teach us how to keep well and safe and help us as we help ourselves, to do what is right. He has given us bodies and minds and he depends upon boys and girls to use these minds and to remember to obey the right. God sent his Son, Jesus, to show us the right way of living. A child learns to know and understand God by sharing in his work, by co-operating with him in his plan for us. Growing out of one's understanding and appreciation of God, out of co-operating with him and sharing in his acts of love, comes genuine worship.

Billie had been a very naughty boy. He had not only failed to be helpful but he had disobeyed mother. At last his mother sat down with him and told him how grieved she was to know that he had not tried that day to be helpful and that he had not remembered to obey. Without a moment's hesitation, Billie replied: "Well, I couldn't help being bad. God didn't make me be a good boy to-day."

Billie had somehow, somewhere, gained the impression that God alone could do this big and important task. He had not formed a habit of co-operating with God through remembering to obey and through learning to act somewhat intelligently upon any little impulse to help. He had, apparently, not learned that God depends upon and needs every boy and girl to make his care effective. He had not discovered that unless he did his part in this co-operative enterprise, he would probably continue rather indefinitely

along the line of least resistance doing the naughty instead of the good deeds each day. He had possibly not been guided to see in parents' and teachers' directions a part of God's care and to recognize these leaders as helpers who understand better than children can something of the orderliness of God's universe and the laws that govern it.

Problem Solving. Problems everywhere confront the primary child. Does it really matter whether or not I obey my mother? Couldn't God keep me safe and make me good even if I didn't try? If I run out in the bitter cold without my hat or coat, couldn't God keep me from catching cold if I asked him to? What must I do to help him take care? If I remember to do what is right, is that helping and co-operating? Out of these and dozens of similar problems of child life may arise occasions for worship. Worship for a child comes often from consideration of just such problems as these. "Dear heavenly Father, help mother to help me to remember to take my medicine," prayed seven-year-old Maxine. Maxine had early found the answer to the problem, which every child faces, "How can I help him take care of me?"

A Dynamic for Conduct. Worship helps to develop a child's appreciations; it may determine definite attitudes and will ultimately aid in the establishment of ideals, and it should motivate later conduct. It is, of course, a personal approach, coming face to face with the Father and feeling a personal relationship to him; but to be of supreme worth it must put the religious dynamic behind conduct, it must "carry over" into a child's life outside the school. Worship surpasses form, it transcends ritual. It is the spirit which vitalizes these mediums, and which, entering into the child,

raises his standards, builds up in him finer attitudes, and motivates conduct. Worship helps a child better to know and understand God and thus to conform to his will. We worship that we may be conformed to the perfect will of God.

Enlists the Whole Life. The highest form of worship is that which enlists the whole life of the worshiper in an enterprise that makes this a better and happier world, a more godlike place. To a great extent we worship in terms of our problems and life situations. Worship grows out of experience, out of human problems. Since play has such a prominent place in the life of children, the play hour with its opportunities for the exercise of self-control and for fellowship may be the surest road to a genuine worship experience. Worship to be sincere grows out of real living. Service activities of various kinds offer excellent opportunities for group living followed often by the worship experience. "Let's say 'Thank you' to God for this opportunity to make a family happy. He needs us to help him care for them and we are glad and happy to prepare our basket," said Miss Howe, as she recognized and took advantage of the worship attitude of her group while they were preparing a Thanksgiving basket. The brief prayer that followed was voiced by Miss Howe, but was the prayer of every little girl in her group. Worship growing out of group experiences in godlike living is almost certain to be vital and genuine. Through working for others, children may be led into closer communion with God. As they share their possessions with others, they can better appreciate God's acts of loving-kindness and his great bounty.

There is little of value in the worship of those individuals who worship only through words and not acts.

Meaning must be given to words through experience if genuine worship is to result. In our educational work we start with activities or enterprises and do not use mere words, the symbols of living, as substitutes. We in the church school aim to provide opportunities for Christlike living that out of these rich and varied and normal situations, worship may naturally and often spontaneously result.

Our worship must be above that of the savage, whose prayer rarely rises above material needs and desires. As we pray, our prayers of petition should be to a great extent in terms of adaptability, asking constantly for aid in adapting ourselves. Instead of allowing and perhaps encouraging little daughter to pray that it will be a nice day so she can go to the picnic, rather suggest that her prayer be: "Help me to be brave and happy to-morrow even if it rains and we can't have the picnic. Help me, dear Father, to find something nice to do at home, if I can't go." If religion be considered as a progressive and final adjustment of life, an engaging of the self in complete social and spiritual adjustment, as someone has pointed out, the desire for adjustment or adaptability should become a keynote in modern worship.

Music is one of the avenues or channels through which one may worship, as are also pictures, poetry, scripture, prayer and offering, but the language that God probably understands best of all is a life lived at its best, lived in harmony with him.

Aims and Purposes

1. To arouse inner feelings of a personal relationship to the Father and to provide avenues of expression toward God.

2. To help the child to form sound individual habits of devotion.

3. To provide for the child worship experiences that both grow out of and "carry over" into his life outside the school, experiences that will transcend mere feelings of reverence and build up in the child attitudes and appreciations that will motivate conduct in his everyday experiences.

The results in attitudes, appreciations, and conduct that we may hope to see in the children are:

1. The bringing about of appreciation for the highest and best elements in life—the true, the good, and the beautiful.

2. The creation of proper attitudes and conduct toward God.

3. The development of right attitudes toward God's children everywhere and a willingness to serve.

Worship is an emotional response in which we express our attitudes toward God. The expression of these attitudes goes out into Christlike living. Worship is establishing a filial relationship with God, a Christlike fellowship with men; and through this act of worship the one who worships gains help and strength for Christlike living. Communion or fellowship alone is much, but is incomplete unless its effect is the establishment of the Jesus way of living.

"We worship God in the first instance because that act stands in its own right, and is of such supreme and sufficient worth as to need no other justification. But when men address themselves simply and sincerely to God, they always discover new ways into the lives of other men."[7]

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[7] Willard L. Sperry, *Reality in Worship*, p. 343. The Macmillan Company, publishers. Used by permission.

For Discussion

1. Formulate your own definition of worship.

2. In a certain book on worship is found the following dedication:

> To the wife and mother of our home, whose spirit of self-sacrifice, of faith, of assurance of God's presence and of his willingness and power to meet every need, makes all of life an act of worship.

Comment upon this dedication.

3. Is worship in its highest sense a matter of words, songs, prayers, and Scripture?

4. Why is the God-concept held by a primary child of great significance?

5. Attempt to trace the development of your own idea of God, showing the ideas held at different times in your life, the reason for your earliest ideas, and the influence these ideas had upon your experience in worship.

6. Do the following statements seem true or false to you?

(*a*) Bread is not showered down from above. Gifts come through individual effort.

(*b*) Worship is essentially a social act.

(*c*) It is part of our work to have for children services of worship with older children and with adults, so that they may participate regularly.

For Further Reading

Reality in Worship, Willard L. Sperry, Chapter IX.
The Religious Consciousness, James Bissett Pratt, Chapters I and II.
Training the Devotional Life, Luther Allan Weigle and Henry Hallam Tweedy, Chapter I.
Worship in the Sunday School, Hugh Hartshorne, Chapter IV.

Childhood and Character, Hugh Hartshorne, Chapter V.
A Study of the Primary Child, Mary Theodora Whitley, Chapter X.
The Meaning of God in Human Experience, W. E. Hocking, Part V.
Devotional Leadership, Gerrit Verkuyl, Chapter I.

CHAPTER II

LEADERS OF WORSHIP

"Lighten, dear Lord, my eyes when blind,
Give me the insight, keen but kind,
Into each wakening, vibrant mind
To see aright.

"From rote and rule unfetter me,
That I may teach more humanly
Whatever makes youth strong and free
To climb the height." [1]

"How can I prepare myself for the task of helping train these children in worship?" asked Miss Richards one morning after church school. This question she directed to the Primary Department superintendent, in whose department she was teaching a class of six-year-old children.

Mrs. Harper had been superintendent of this department for a number of years; and in all this time Miss Richards was the first teacher who had approached her with that question. Miss Richards had been the only teacher in the department who had taken work in the community school that fall, and there she had had a vision of what it is to be a real leader. Now she hoped to put into practice the things that had been held up to her as of the highest value.

Mrs. Harper during her ten years as superintendent had not felt it necessary to attend a training class, nor had she read books and magazines pertaining to recent

[1] Marjorie Seymour Watts, "A Teacher's Prayer." From the *Journal of The National Education Association*, June, 1926. Used by permission.

methods. She was a superintendent who boasted of the fact that in all her ten years she had missed being in her place only on two Sundays, and then because of sickness. It is no wonder that Mrs. Harper felt rather helpless as she attempted to answer Miss Richards' question. She had not visited any other schools to observe what was being done; her knowledge of what recent writers were advocating upon the subject of modern helps and methods for church-school workers was infinitesimal; and she had attended few conferences or conventions to gain a broader outlook. There are many Mrs. Harpers in our church schools to-day, who need an awakening to their responsibilities as leaders of children.

"There is no standing still! Even as I pause
The steep path shifts and I slip back apace,
No idling on the pathway hard and slow,
I must go forward or must backward go.
And few would struggle on with bleeding feet,
And few would even gain the higher heights,
Except for the stern law that bids us know,
We must go forward or must backward go." [2]

When we speak of leaders, we mean not only the superintendent of the department, but we include all adults who are workers in the department, for the officers too have their responsibility in at least actively participating in the worship, and thus exercising the influence of example. For these leaders there should be ample general background as well as the specific preparation of the leaders of worship for each day. We may therefore think of the preparation needed by leaders, first as general, and second as the specific preparation for the day.

[2] Susan Coolidge, "Forward." From *A Few More Verses*. Little, Brown and Company, publishers. Used by permission.

General Preparation of Leaders

As to general preparation for any leader of worship, one quite naturally thinks, first of all, of that indispensable association with the thoughts, ideas, and ideals of the recognized leaders of the entire field. This association we readily and unhesitatingly class as a prerequisite for assured and confident poise of the leader. She will know what is being done and why. Such association any leader finds easily accessible in professional magazines and books as well as by occasional personal contacts with leaders of real worth. There are a number of excellent magazines designed especially for elementary leaders, as well as others for general use, with a section devoted to the specialized unit of primary work. It is suggested that primary workers read their own denominational magazines and exchange with leaders in other denominations.

The reading of professional books and magazines should be as much a habit of the church-school teachers as of public-school leaders, and gradually this attitude of desiring to read the best is gaining ground among our church leaders. What leader of children will not be better prepared to help in their training, who has thoughtfully read even three professional books in her field? Suggested reading lists are often sent out by the denominational children's workers and by leaders in the interdenominational field, and much credit is due these workers for their carefully classified lists.

Attendance at special conferences and conventions, enrollment in a local teacher-training course, visiting other church schools and also public schools should be required of leaders of children. To watch what others are doing, to see how the children respond in day

school, and to understand something of the public-school methods is certain to prove useful. Sometimes teachers become so engrossed in their own local situations that they forget that other places may be able to give them new ideas and that they in turn should be passing on to others their own successful plans. The exchange of ideas in a training class, the association and fellowship with others of similar ideals, as well as the inspiration gained in working with the instructor, give a primary teacher a confidence without which she cannot be her best self. Even the most excellent materials and superior methods are unsafe when used by a teacher who does not know why her materials are good or why she is using them. A definite and thorough understanding of things fundamental is essential. This, and this only, leaves the leader free to become the friend and guide of her children, one to whom they go with full assurance that they will be understood. When there is a feeling of inability and of inadequacy, work becomes a burden, but a satisfying sense of success and joy will be experienced by one who knows what she is doing and why she does it. The broader outlook which may be gained through reading and study, through attendance at teacher-training schools, conventions, and special conferences, either denominational or interdenominational, not only gives inspiration to go on with this great task of training children, but helps with specific problems which every teacher must face.

Knowledge of Child Nature. To be a real teacher, to attempt to lead and direct the worship experiences of children six, seven, and eight years of age, to make vital and significant for them these moments of devotion, a rather intimate knowledge of child life seems indispensable. To know and appreciate the typical in-

terests of children, to understand their religious natures and needs, to have some knowledge of their dominant traits, capabilities, attitudes, and emotions, is important for all. In considering the characteristics of the religious life of a primary child we need first to recognize that he possesses traits and capacities that are very different from those of an adult. We usually do realize that this is true, but we must also be cognizant of the fact that when he comes from the Beginners' Department into the primary school, he has not undergone any sudden change. Just as it was natural for men in the childhood of the race to pray only for material blessings and to endow God with physical attributes, so it is natural for the concrete-minded little child to do the same. This need not disturb us, provided we are sure that to the child God is indeed a vital factor in his life, that he is the Creator, the loving heavenly Father who understands and loves and wishes to help all of his children. We must be very certain also that the child is carefully guided, step by step, and that we help him to know how to pray and for what to pray. Gradually but surely he will come to the place where, normally, he gives up the former physical ideas of God. We know that God is very real and very near to a primary child and this fact needs continued emphasis. A distant God is not likely to function very vitally in his life nor to affect and influence materially his developing purposes and present actions.

A child judges as to right and wrong according to the results that he sees or feels. He finds that his comfort and happiness depend upon the approval of the adults who figure in his affairs. Love of approval is an important factor in forming social habits and attitudes. The primary child's social group now includes

not only the parents but his teachers and children of his own age. Their approval and disapproval have come to play a most important part in his character development. Having formed a definite God-concept, God's approval and disapproval become of primary concern to the child. When he realizes that, just as parents or teachers are made unhappy because of his wrongdoing, so also is the loving heavenly Father, then it is that he may regret what he has done and come to have new purposes and new desires such as he feels would be approved.

The attitudes children take as to what is desirable in conduct will depend upon home training and proper conduct patterns and also to a large extent upon contacts with other children. When a tendency to act in a certain direction has resulted pleasantly, the act will probably be repeated. It is essential that parents and teachers recognize the significance of this fact in the training of children, by making an act result pleasantly when a repetition of the act is desired, and by seeing that it results unpleasantly when we wish a tendency to act in a certain direction weakened. It is highly desirable that we set before children right examples in ourselves and in the stories we use with them, in order to help them in the forming of right judgments. Children need to have before them suitable patterns or examples of kindness, of generosity, usefulness, unselfishness, promptness, and reverence. Truth in living form is the greatest example. Imitative powers in a child are so strong that there is a tendency to pattern after both real characters and favorite story characters.

Often a child loves and appreciates his parents and the things they are constantly doing for him, but even so cannot seem to express that appreciation for them.

Recognizing the primary child's limitations in this respect, one can readily recognize the necessity for training him in the ability to express his love for his heavenly Father. This means he needs to be taught to have right attitudes and feelings toward God, and that leaders should provide for him channels through which his emotions may find natural expression. Thinking and purposing are naturally concurrent with feelings, and we should recognize that it is the whole child who thinks and loves and feels and acts. To discover methods whereby we can help him to cultivate and give expression to the best and highest feelings of which he is capable, is the objective of a real leader.

General Educational Principles. We cannot hope to help children in the art of worship without the application of sound educational principles. One of the principles is that we cannot set any subject off by itself—it must be related to life in order to become vital. Through the use of this principle schools are coming closer to life. They are taking into consideration life problems and life situations, and making it possible for children to learn by doing. Another principle is that the emotional nature of the child requires training just as certainly as his mind and hands need it. Right emotions must be aroused and the child must be given practice in the expression of right appreciations. Just as surely as a child should practice his piano or penmanship lessons, so he must have continuous opportunity for the expression of feelings and appreciations. A child learns politeness and courtesy by being polite; he learns to co-operate by co-operating; he must learn to worship by worshiping.

Doctor Kilpatrick says, "My aim as I work with children is to have them live more richly and successfully

right now in the belief that this will mean most to them and to others, both now and hereafter."[3]

Professor Strayer says of general education, "Education is worth just the difference it makes in the activities of the one who is educated."[4] May we not say the same of worship?

We are just beginning to recognize that what these educators assert of general educational aims may well be applied to the field of religious education, and particularly to worship. Regardless of the subject taught, the child mind is just the same. We must concede that our daily prayers and acts of worship are incomplete unless they reach out into our very lives. A child may worship truly when alone, but worship is to a great degree a social act; and therefore as the child finds himself with a group of other worshipers who have gained a sense of unity through listening and working together, he has gained a sense of membership in a group, as well as a developing sense of the highest spiritual value. School life is becoming more real as it loses in formality and adds more of purposeful activities teeming with actual life problems. The language of worship is not limited to words. We may learn to express ourselves toward God in various ways—in song, in offering, in prayer—but most of all by living in a way that accords with his desires for us.

Worship Training. There should be a clear understanding on the part of every teacher that there is a difference between worship and the study of worship materials and practice in their use. As the teachers work upon their various enterprises, fitting occasions

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[3] William Heard Kilpatrick, *Foundation of Method*, p. 367. The Macmillan Company, publishers. Used by permission.

[4] George Drayton Strayer, *A Brief Course in the Teaching Process*, p. 1. The Macmillan Company, publishers. Used by permission.

will often arise for the presentation of material that will be helpful to the children, when a verse, a poem or a song seems needed to deepen and enrich the expression or to offer the child a key to right conduct. When isolated materials are first presented out of relation to experience there can seldom be enough associations in the child's mind to make clear or to fix the verse or the song. The fact that a leader has explained the verse, "Be ye kind one to another," and used pictures and told a story with it, does not assure its having sufficient association for the child to make it valuable worship material. To have vital meaning and significance the verse should be associated with situations in which children have shown kindness in the work and play periods (all together or in small groups) to newcomers in the group, to sick or old people, to parents at home, or to teachers. Actual projects in performing kind acts will give meaning to the verse and will make memorization a simple matter. There can be sufficient biblical material that is common to the three groups to provide amply for departmental worship.

When longer selections are given there should be established motives for memorizing—to prepare a song to share with the department in worship, to sing to shut-ins, to teach the folk at home, or to use in family worship. In this way, already associated material, suitable for worship may be memorized without becoming the subject of mechanical drill which often dissipates its real value. After materials are learned and have become a part of the children themselves, then they can be used to advantage in worship, either in the small group or in the department.

The plan of having frequent meetings of all the officers and teachers in a department is a means of

solving specific problems that arise, as well as of learning better to know and understand each other and the problems of the entire school. This association at least once a month with the others in the same department, is also a means of general background preparation. A plan for personal enrichment, learning better to appreciate pictures, music, poetry, stories, or the literature of the Bible, may be a project for these meetings, supplementing the discussion of specific aims, objectives, and problems of the school. Many women to-day enjoy belonging to reading clubs, sewing circles, or picture-study clubs. It might be possible to have a Primary Teachers' Club, taking up problems connected with art in its various forms—pictures, music, poetry—gaining a richer background from which to draw, as they work with the children. There must be far more in a reservoir than the water to be used—there must likewise be a reserve of knowledge in the mind of the teacher if she is to do her work well.

Specific Preparation

The specific preparation of the superintendent or leader of worship for the day includes (1) her own spiritual preparation, (2) the program preparation, and (3) the co-operative preparation with teachers and officers.

Spiritual Preparation. Obviously, the best results come when the leader of worship is spiritually well prepared. When the leader comes before the group with an attitude of devout thanksgiving for the blessings of life and of the day, the worship feeling can more easily be transmitted to others. The very air seems charged with devotion and love and thankfulness. The true inward grace of a leader is shown throughout the

session, but particularly so during worship. Her spirit of joy, reverence, and devotion will lend itself to the group in such a way as to bring from them the very best of which they are capable.

The leader may possess inward grace, she may be very conscious herself of fellowship with God, she may be extremely devout and thankful, and yet, because of failure to take care of details in program preparation, be unable to get a response from primary children. Because of little thought as to the materials which may arouse religious feelings, and less thought upon the best way in which to use these materials, a worship service may be nothing more than an "opening exercise" —not a real worship experience. To bring to children a feeling of actual companionship with the heavenly Father is not an easy task, and is, therefore, one to which very careful attention must be given. We must, first of all, be capable of understanding and experiencing worship ourselves if we would attempt to help little children in their worship. It is only as parents and teachers are themselves sincere in their own appreciations that they can hope to help establish these appreciations in children.

"Lord, who am I to teach the way
To little children day by day,
So prone myself to go astray?

"I teach from knowledge, but I know
How faint they flicker, and how low
The candles of my knowledge glow.

"I teach them love for all mankind
And all God's creatures, but I find
My love comes lagging on behind.

"Lord, if their guide I still may be
Oh let the little children see
The teacher leaning hard on thee." [5]

[5] Leslie Hill, "The Teacher." From *Wings of Oppression*. The Stratford Company, publishers. Used by permission.

Program Preparation. The actual recent experiences of the children may become the basis for their worship. This the leader must understand as she plans. If a part of their offering has been spent to buy an Easter lily for the church, the Easter lily itself may be the center of a worship service; if a recent out-of-doors experience has been enjoyed, some definite use of the incident of this experience may be a basis for a worship service; if the church is being repaired, enlarged, or a new church being built, the leader has a fine opportunity for worship services in which the church itself becomes the central idea.

Material should be carefully selected in accordance with the subject or problem which is the specific occasion for worship. It should be material that the children can understand and mean—something that will function in their lives to-day. Having made a wise and careful selection of materials, the superintendent or leader of the group will have in mind a thorough outline of the work to be done. The leader should be familiar with all songs, scripture, poetry, and stories that are to be used, that there need be no hesitancy of manner because of lack of preparation. It is only when the leader is well prepared on the materials of worship that she can succeed in mastering the immediate and unexpected situations as they arise. She is left free to think of the children for whom she desires this genuine experience of fellowship, and she can thus give herself unreservedly to them without being hampered by lack of familiarity with the materials she is using and the method of presentation.[6]

Co-operative Preparation. There is also the co-

[6] See Chapter III.

operative preparation of the superintendent with the officers and teachers in her department. Sometimes the superintendent seems to consider that the teachers have no responsibility for the carrying out of the department worship service. More often, perhaps, the teachers have that idea regarding themselves. What can the class teacher do in helping with the department worship program, and in creating an environment for its expression? First, all teachers and officers should feel that they have a very real responsibility. They should come to the school before time for the session, and share with the superintendent and early comers among the children in making the room attractive for the day. As soon as the pianist, by means of a few soft chords, has indicated that it is time to begin the service of worship, each class teacher should see that her own group is comfortably settled and ready. The teacher should take an active part in the singing, and in all other parts of the service, enriching her own worship experiences as she worships with the children. Teachers and officers should not feel that they are privileged to talk and walk about. The officers as well as the teachers should be alive to their opportunities and eager to help in every possible way. In the worship they can aid by actively and whole-heartedly participating, thus being examples for the children.

The class teacher needs also to cultivate alertness to the possibilities of worship with the little group, that is, her own class. In a small group there is opportunity for freedom and spontaneity, and it is the duty of the class teacher to encourage spontaneous prayers on the part of the children. This can successfully be accomplished in the class group. Occasionally a certain amount of spontaneity comes in the department group,

and this is more easily possible and likely to occur frequently when the class teachers are encouraging and stimulating spontaneous prayer and other worship expression in the little group.

A real worship experience induces godlike living and is in turn the result of such living. The class teacher next to the parent can come nearest to the life situations and problems of her little group. She can become the means of helping the children to a richer worship experience as she helps them to live more nearly as God would have them live. Careful guidance in godlike living is a most valuable condition for inducing worship; in fact, may not properly motivated action be worship itself—more genuine and vital than any other sort? Is real worship, after all, a matter of the lips?

In conversation with the children about things that happen in connection with their everyday lives, about the things they bring to class, their surroundings, the day, their class activities, there may be possibilities for genuine worship. The class teacher seldom realizes just how great a responsibility she has in the field of worship, since right living and working together, if not actual worship, are at least the basis for worship; and the class teacher is the one in a church school who is in closest touch with the activity of the children. Leading the children in their various enterprises, working and playing together can result in the very best sort of worship experience. Learning to play, to be fair to other children, and willingly to share, sometimes giving up one's own turn, can induce a genuine understanding and feeling of co-operation with the Father, and thus a more real worship experience than can ever be attained by sitting down and writing in a notebook, "Be ye kind one to another."

The Pianist

In the Primary Department there is no one who has a much greater opportunity than has the pianist. So much depends upon her, and yet she seldom herself realizes how much.

There was great consternation upon the countenance of a primary superintendent, as the visitor, glancing at her watch, noted the hour for the worship service to begin. Frantically the leader glanced at each of several doors, at her watch, at the other teachers. Her face became an almost vivid red, as she walked to the back of the room and said to the visitor, "My pianist is not here." If every pianist in a Primary Department could have known what that primary superintendent suffered in those ten minutes, not one would ever again say, "Oh, I'm only the pianist." It is true, this particular leader had evidently become too dependent upon her pianist, and seemed utterly unable to think what to do in her absence. Her program was apparently so set and so rigid that there was in her mind no idea of a possible change; notwithstanding, the pianist should have been in her place before the hour, and long enough ahead of time to have become adjusted to the situation and to the group. In fairness also to the leader, she should have been more prompt.

The pianist in co-operation with the superintendent should select several short instrumental numbers to be used when needed. Generally a selection at the beginning of the worship is needed to prepare the minds of the children and to set the mood. The pianist must know where to find the songs quickly in case one not planned for on the written program is needed. Many of us have agonized over the search through book after

book for a selection needed that moment, by a pianist who had not known sufficiently well either what materials she had or where to find them.

There are so many ways in which a selection can be played. A primary pianist should be infinitely more than someone who can read music readily. Many a piano teacher is found to be unfitted as a pianist in the Primary Department. She must interpret the music in such a way that it can be a means to a worship experience. There is no place in this group for the mechanical sort of playing sometimes heard. The person at the piano must have a fine sense of feeling as well as of time and rhythm. She must not drag out the songs, nor blunder over any notes. She must have a keen sense of fitness and unusual adaptability. She must watch the leader to sense when any change from the original plan may be felt wise or expedient. If there is any break or pause, she must know quickly how best to bridge the gap. There may be short snatches of instrumental music at many places during the program, and this music must be suitable and well played. When the late comers are admitted, she must know just how much to play, and how to close without any feeling of abruptness. She may feel it necessary to change her choice or selection because of room or weather conditions. The ideal is that she shall be immeasurably more than some one to play the piano—she should be a master-hand at the piano with a thorough understanding of children and an appreciation of the value that music may have in their lives.

Using Situations As They Arise

Problem Solving. Would that the leaders of children could but realize that real worship is often problem-

solving! When a child finds himself out of harmony with God's plan for him, we may help him to discover what he ought to do. He faces a need and he should know it. Perhaps it is unwillingness to share with others. He must recognize the need and try to discover what he ought to do about it. Shall he himself do something about it, or does he think he can put it all in God's hands and say, "Help me to share," and go blithely on in the same selfish path? The leader here finds her task. This problem should be an occasion for worship. A group of children may face the fact that they are unwilling to share. They then try to discover why they can't willingly give, the leader directing their thought, and helping them to see that they ought to do something about it. The leader (usually the teacher in the small group) endeavors to relate these children to God in such a way that they can learn to be their best selves. To do this she will make use of any materials, verses, songs, pictures, or stories, that may aid at this point. After the use of some of this material, a little informal conversation with the children as to their own idea about this problem and its solution may help. To start where the children are, facing with them their common everyday problems, and relating them to God and his plan for us, is a great responsibility, but by accepting and meeting it lasting results may be obtained which cannot be reached by merely taking a more or less general and abstract idea or theme, and assembling materials around it, regardless of whether or not the everyday lives of the children will be touched.

Taking Advantage of Opportunities. More and more we are coming to feel that informality in worship is desirable for children. The genuine worship response may not always be evoked according to a set schedule

of time. All leaders of children, recognizing this fact, must be keenly alive to opportunities for taking advantage of every possible situation that may promote a feeling of worship. The more freedom we can give children, the greater these genuine, natural, normal tendencies to worship will be, provided this freedom can be so directed that the children are scarcely aware of the strong leadership. As has been said, children coming from the extremely informal Beginners' Department have undergone no sudden change, and it may be that we are expecting and demanding more than they are able to give when we try to have the primary group worship almost as adults do. We do like a part of our Sunday program to be formal and dignified to a certain extent, but not rigid or fixed. It must be flexible.

Using Judgment Regarding Recognition of Visitors. To welcome visitors is one of the values in having a period of fellowship which often precedes the worship and becomes a preparation for it. To make our caller feel welcome does not, however, necessitate asking him to talk to the group. When a distinguished visitor comes, a teacher too often feels he ought to be asked to "say a few words" to the children. Not knowing how much or how little he knows about the primary child, she sometimes issues this invitation. It may prove extremely unwise to do this, particularly so when his talk may drag out over precious moments of time, and when he has no way of knowing what particular subject was being developed, nor how he can contribute to the needs of these children.

A young and inexperienced minister dropped in to visit the Primary Department in his own church. The superintendent, in the midst of her worship program, noticed who the visitor was. As soon as the song they

were singing was concluded she called upon him to speak to the children. He spoke to the group rather vaguely, attempting to make this group of primary children understand and realize something of the meaning of "oil in their lamps." He told how important is the oil that makes the auto and many other machines operate; he told them that we too need oil, and disastrously put this question, "And what is the oil that little boys and girls need?" Jackie, honestly and fervently, out of his six years of life experiences, called out from the rear of the room, "Castor oil."

When visitors come to visit our department, either on Sunday or during the week, we are glad and rejoice if they have come because of a genuine interest in the work of the school; we wish they would come oftener. We do wish callers would always come at the beginning of a session and remain throughout, however, rather than to drop in for a few moments only. In these few moments they can see very little of what is being done. Particularly do we desire that they will not come in nor leave during the period of worship.

Graded Worship

It is perfectly natural and normal for a child to be religious. His religion differs from that of an adult as do his physical and mental capabilities, but it is just as vital and influential in its power to determine conduct. It seems self-evident that just as children in public-school work are graded according to their ages and capacities, so must there be for them in the church school graded worship. A primary child cannot enter into the spirit of a worship service planned for adults. There may be some advantages in allowing children to be with the adult group for a little portion of the

church-school hour, but these advantages melt away in comparison with the greater opportunities afforded them in graded worship.

The informal program can be more easily carried out when there can be an arrangement according to grades with a separate room for each grade. Then is *strictly* graded worship a possibility. Having separate grade rooms, however, is only a dream for most of us, and an ideal which we may not reach for many years. Meantime, leaders must go on making the most of the things they have, remembering always that many departments could have a better equipment if they would but ask for it, at the same time explaining to those in charge the reasons why the children rather than the adults should be first in the consideration of a church. The tragedy of any situation is not in being unlovely but in being allowed to remain that way. Therefore trying to get the best equipment possible, and making the most of what one has, are both duties which confront those in charge of primary work.

For Discussion

1. Outline a plan for a teachers' meeting that will be helpful in improving the worship of the school.

2. Explain the importance of the general attitude and habits of the teacher in her personal worship upon the improvement of the worship of her children.

3. What do you consider the best ways of conserving the values of books and magazines for your own enrichment?

4. List five outstanding characteristics of primary children which should be kept in mind as you plan to help them in their worship.

For Further Reading

Principles of Education, Chapman and Counts, Chapter XVII.
The Psychology of Childhood, Norsworthy and Whitley, Chapter XIII.
A Study of the Primary Child, M. T. Whitley, Chapters VIII, IX, X.
A Book of Worship, Wade Crawford Barclay.
How to Teach Religion, George Herbert Betts, Chapters I, V, IX.
Foundation of Method, Kilpatrick, Chapter XVI.
The Primary School, Annie Moore, Chapter IV.
The Teaching of Ideals, W. W. Charters, Chapter XIV.
Present Day Problems in Religious Education, Hetty Lee.

CHAPTER III

BUILDING A PROGRAM OF WORSHIP

"To love someone more dearly every day,
To help a wandering child to find his way,
To ponder o'er a noble thought and pray,
And smile when evening falls,
This is my task." [1]

THOUGH we build services of worship for our children, and decide where the worship service may best be placed in the program for the day, we should not think that worship for the day is over when we have used the prepared service. For any leader of children to fail to use every occasion for worship that presents itself, would be to overlook and slight an important phase of the work. Programs are built and are used more or less as planned, but we also make use of occasions that arise when worship naturally, normally, and spontaneously becomes opportune. To wait always for that opportune, appropriate, natural occasion to arise, however, might mean to omit entirely any worship for the day. Since we cannot wait for a time that may never come, since we cannot presuppose in every case a skilled and trained leader who will recognize and make use of these opportune occasions as they arise, we are assuming what to some may seem unnatural situations, and are building programs that anticipate certain problems which, while seemingly stereotyped and fixed, need not be so. Neither do we expect the program as given to

[1] Maud Louise Ray, "My Task." Lorenze Publishing Company, copyright, 1903 and 1913. International copyright secured. Quoted from the well-known solo by E. L. Ashford. Used by permission.

become a crutch for any worker. Type programs are outlined merely as suggestions, and are not intended to be followed literally unless the leader believes that they will meet the needs of her group. The ideal program is the one built by each leader with the special experiences and needs of her own children in mind.

Discovering the Opportune Time for Worship

More and more we are tending in our primary groups toward a great deal of informality. In no type of program so much as in the extremely informal sort is skilled leadership imperative. To quickly see one's opportunities and to turn them to good advantage will demand skill and great adaptability. To conserve every possible worship value is our aim and desire, but not every leader of little children understands perfectly the technique of handling unusual situations and making them count for the most. For the average church-school leader, type programs are quite essential in aiding her in formulating her plans. It may be best for the primary superintendent in most church schools to adhere rather strictly to her plan, as she, in co-operation with the other workers, has made it, being sufficiently versatile, of course, to omit and change when the occasion warrants it.

Those carrying out the more formal type of program may consider that it is best to change the place of the departmental program of worship from time to time. (In vacation and week-day schools this change is of greater frequency than in Sunday school.) Sometimes a superintendent feels that her department is not ready to worship at the time set in her plan. She may, if skillful, adapt the program then to the group, or to the day, and introduce the worship at a time when the chil-

dren are in the right spirit for it. In other words, a program should be sufficiently flexible to admit of some changes. In her notes a superintendent or leader will preserve for future reference the plan as made and the plan as actually carried out, so that these may serve as a guide in future plans. Certain situations may arise making a complete change of program seem necessary. One should be prepared to make such alterations as will adequately meet unforeseen conditions.

Fellowship as a Preparation. Ordinarily, the children are not ready to worship instantly upon arriving at the church school. Commencing immediately upon some kind of work helps prepare many children, but some of the children do not come early enough to be included in presession activities. Primary boys and girls are very human. These children who have come to Sunday school meet friends and teachers whom they probably have not seen for at least a week, and possibly longer. The thing immediately and outstandingly upon their minds is to look about and see these friends and say, "How do you do." They are not ready to be pushed or forced into anything. Would it not be wise to start with them where they are? By applying the law of shifting stimuli, we can get them to the place where we desire them to be, but not in a minute. Would we not make greater progress ultimately if we remember not to force, but to lead? They will come, gradually and willingly.

A little group of five-year-old boys and girls had gathered about the teacher in a week-day session. The teacher had brought several extremely interesting pictures to show them. She was talking to them about a pretty little girl in one of the pictures and asking them what they thought she was doing. Despite the unusual

charm of the leader and the attractiveness of the picture no one seemed to be looking. Billy was murmuring to Bennie, and Maude was smiling and nodding to Louise; and no one was attending. Yes, they were attending—but not to the picture. Finally Billy spoke up, "This is a new suit!" Bennie said, "I have on my new shoes," and Maude was pointing to hers. The leader put down the pictures and looked at the suit and the shoes and she said, "How many of you have new suits or dresses?" Several hands. "How many of you have on new shoes? Let me see them now. Are you sure they are new? They are all lovely, I'm sure." It took only a moment, but they were ready now to talk about the girl in the picture.

These were five-year-old children, and six-year-olds have not suddenly grown up. They are not always ready for the thing we have for them, and we only lose time by trying to force it upon them. The solution to this problem may be in having a little fellowship service before the worship. Fellowshiping with each other is the thing uppermost in their minds. We can take time to say "How are you?" to each other. We may even stand and shake hands with the children near by. The leader may ask about Harry, who is absent; and all will greet Homer, who has been sick and has just returned —and there is a new boy! How happy we are to have Walter with us to-day. He is Eugene's cousin and has come to visit, but we make him feel welcome. Frances has just moved into our neighborhood, and we welcome her to our group and are so glad she is to join our church school. Carolyn had met her at the door and recognizing her as a new girl, had shown her where to put her hat. She has adopted her for the time being and so volunteers what information she has as to her

age and grade. Mildred suggests that we might sing, "A welcome to you" to Frances, and this we do.

Experiences such as these can become the basis of the worship experience, since love of God may come through love of and fellowship with our neighbors. The pianist is in her place, and at the close of the fellowship service, the leader asks, "Are we all ready now to listen to some music?" The boys and girls will be ready; and then, perhaps, at the close of the soft music all will rise and sing, "O come and let us worship." It will probably be a group of boys and girls who are ready to worship.

Birthday Recognition. In the fellowship service is included recognition of birthdays. In large departments birthdays are usually recognized but once a month, and all of the birthday children for that month are greeted and their birthday offerings accepted. A birthday verse, such as "Jesus advanced in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man," a "Happy Birthday" from the group, and a card given to each birthday child is sufficient recognition. This simple recognition service is usually more acceptable to the eight-year-old boys who often dislike "having a fuss made over them." If a more elaborate celebration of birthdays is desired, a few brief remarks by the superintendent, stating some specific reasons why the month is a fine month in which to have one's birthday, a birthday song, the presentation of cards, or the placing of seals on a birthday calendar just before their offering of birthday money, and a short closing prayer are sometimes used. There are various plans, and whatever seems most desirable for the particular group may be used.

The birthday celebrations in the week-day sessions

might afford a real experience, if the group is small, by having a birthday party once a month in honor of the birthday children. At that time there can be opportunity for the doing of things for each other, the sharing in games and the experience of eating together. The provision of a real birthday cake with candles, if one can be provided, affords a desirable experience since training in courtesy is an important matter in any group. The opportunity for learning to ask a blessing upon the gift of food is another of the values of providing such a situation.

The Broader Fellowship. The fellowship service may at times include more than the immediate group. There may be occasions when a visiting missionary will be present and can be welcomed. It may extend to welcoming children from some other department who are visitors for the day. Another entire department, if small, might be invited to the Primary Department for fellowship and worship. Several Junior boys might be asked in to perform some service for the department and then recognized and welcomed during the fellowship period. Fellowship includes the sharing of experiences with the immediate group but also, when feasible, extends outward to others.

Building the Program

Love of God, which inevitably follows love of man, is, of course, expressed in worship. The worship experience itself is an elusive and complex thing, difficult to analyze and to follow. In building a program which aims to develop the worship experience of a child, we strive to parallel as nearly as possible, with outward forms of expression, his natural inward feelings as they arise within him. His desire to dedicate an offering,

for example, would not be one of his first feelings. Rather does this emotion come as a result of greater realization of the greatness of God in relation to his own littleness and dependence. It comes as does any desire to show appreciation in some tangible way. Usually it is a growing, unfolding thing, the resultant of expressions of praise, thanksgiving, and prayer. And thus we see that as we build our program, there is a reason why the offering comes rather late in the service. We endeavor to think these things through and find the logical place for the parts we have planned, realizing as we build that the worship service should have climaxing elements as does a story.

Superintendent and Teachers' Planning. It was late in June and Mrs. Johns had called a meeting of all the teachers and officers in the Primary Department. Mrs. Johns was superintendent, and when she called a special meeting of her teachers there were few who did not plan to attend. At the last special meeting, she recalled, they had sat around a big table in her assistant's lovely home and had together mounted and carefully catalogued the primary pictures. Now was the time when she wanted to begin the building of the departmental worship programs for next fall. Mrs. Johns was thoroughly convinced that worship programs, being of such importance in the school, need much careful consideration and work. She felt that it was the privilege and duty of her teachers to have some part in the planning of these departmental worship programs. She wished to have their help, but more than that she desired that every teacher in her school should feel that she had a part and responsibility for the worship training of the children.

Source Materials. As the group of teachers sat down

together, ready for an evening of planning, there was a look of eagerness about them as they took out their pencils and set to work. On the table Mrs. Jones had placed innumerable books and magazines, her huge scrapbooks, and the record of last year's programs. For Mrs. Clark and Miss Spence, who had but recently come into the department as teachers, Mrs. Johns made a few explanations. She spoke of their regular plan of mapping out in a very general and somewhat sketchy fashion the plan for the year, noting special days that naturally make a definite emphasis at certain times. Easter, Mother's Day, Christmas, etc., had to be kept in mind so that each teacher could be watching for suitable materials. She explained about her scrapbook, in which for years she had filed away and classified materials suitable for use with the children, had kept names of books and companies, picture lists, and choice poems or quotations which she might find usable at some time. She suggested that it was an excellent plan for each teacher to have some plan for filing, classifying and preserving new materials for her work, as discoveries were made. "No one," she said, "has ever regretted the time spent for such a purpose." The music scrapbook too, she observed, had proved a great success. This was a large loose leaf notebook into which had been fitted medium-weight gray cover-paper. On each page had been neatly pasted one or more songs, depending upon their size. These had been carefully classified, an extended bit of gummed linen cloth had been fitted to the pages, and upon these projecting parts had been neatly printed such song titles as Winter, Praise, Prayers, Offering, Friendliness, Service, Christmas, Easter. There were two of these music books, one for the pianist and one for the superintendent. The pianist explained that

she had been inserting extra pages upon which she was pasting appropriate piano numbers that she found here and there in worn books and magazines. Only those tested and tried were allowed to have a place in her book, she said.

Many books were on the table before Mrs. Johns and her fellowworkers. There were the books of lessons for the three years, innumerable books of stories, a Perry picture catalogue, a Bible with a good concordance, and other books containing helps for primary teachers. There were sections from leading magazines which contained worked-out programs and which Mrs. Johns had on file, as well as a record of her programs for the past three years.

Preparing Programs. Having assembled the reference material to which they could refer when necessary, the next step was to work out tentatively some of the programs. They tried to keep ever in mind the projects and enterprises that were to be carried on in the various groups, jotting down special days, and planning the year by making a general outline, just to get a bird's-eye view of what was ahead, and to suggest needed subjects for this group. Mrs. Johns stressed particularly the necessity for a careful consideration of the experiences and needs of the group with whom they were working, how best to interpret these experiences, and what available materials might aid in their interpretation. Next, the plan was to concentrate more particularly on suggestions for the fall quarter, with a calendar showing the dates and number of Sundays in each month, before them.

The instrumental music, Mrs. Johns felt, could be turned over almost entirely to her very competent pianist, who was always prepared to make valuable sug-

gestions of suitable music, adapted to the various occasions, and to the time allotted for this phase of the work. A call to worship was considered, and they decided together that for the first few Sundays of the fall they would use something with which the second and third-year children had already built up strong associations. This was to remain the same for several Sundays as in that way it would come to have more meaning and significance to them.

Many children would have just returned from summer vacations and new children would be entering the department, so this group of leaders decided that October was an opportune time for stressing the subject of reverence for the church. The decorations would be autumn leaves and flowers, which selected groups might help arrange, and the opening music would be the Chopin Prelude, Op. 28, No. 15, as arranged in *First Studies in the Classics,* by Charles W. Landon. The call to worship planned for was the verse, "I was glad when they said unto me, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord.'"

Following the call would come informal conversation in regard to the church and our happiness in being together here again in the "House of the Lord." Next would follow what Mrs. Johns liked to speak of to her group as the invocation—a short prayer asking God's blessing upon all and an utterance of thanks for this privilege of coming together to worship.

After the short prayer, Jessie Gaynor's song, "The Church," would serve to emphasize the theme. Following this song, the verse, "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise," would seem fitting, given worshipfully by one class, by a single child, or by all, as might subsequently be decided upon.

The superintendent, opening her Bible, might say: "I have found in the Bible a verse that I wish to share with you to-day. Maybe some of you know it. I often say it over and over to myself when I think about God's many gifts. 'It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord.'" An appropriate song following upon this verse would be "Can a Little Child Like Me."

The prayer may follow at this point. The children may themselves suggest the thoughts they would like to have incorporated in the prayer. This they will readily do if the leader asks them for what particular things they wish to thank God to-day. They will perhaps speak of fathers, mothers, and friends, of this happy Sunday and of the church. This very brief prayer voiced by the superintendent will be followed by the thought that we have said "Thank you" to the Father, and now we will thank him in another way, by bringing our gifts for others.

The pianist may play softly "Offering Hymn" and, unannounced, the children will sing this offering song. For the offertory music the pianist may play a very short instrumental number.

The song, "Praise Ye the Lord," may be sung by third-year children, after which Mrs. Johns may say: "We have just been singing about praising God. We can do that here but also at home, on the playground and in our schools. We praise and serve him best of all when we do as he wants us to do." The prayer song, "Help us to do the things we should," was to be the closing thought—a challenge to these little folk for all the week.

Much of the material for these first Sundays in the fall was selected, keeping in mind what songs or verses the new children probably knew and using each Sunday

some of this material. The first-grade teachers understood that it would be necessary for them to find occasions to fix the newer materials in mind when enough associations had been built up with them. To share in the worship service with the other children they knew would supply an incentive or motive for the memorization of the newer materials by the first grade group.

The next subject or theme was an appreciation theme—gratitude and thankfulness to God for his great and good gifts, with the specific problem of how we can show him we are truly grateful. Some of the general subjects that this group felt were needed by their children as subjects for worship were: Loving and Giving, Our Helpers, Our Friends, Being a Friend, Awakening Time, Jesus the Children's Friend, Being Helpers, Being Happy, Making Others Happy, Happy Homes for All, Thanking God, Thanking Others, God's Care for His Children, His Care at Night, Being Dependable.

The programs for the first quarter were well under way and could easily be completed at the next regular meeting. "It is sometimes a good plan," said Mrs. Johns, "to allow the children from time to time to help in the planning of worship programs. It might be a single class or a representative from each class who through careful suggestions and questions could help in planning some future program. Children like to be consulted about their own programs, and to do so gives them a training that is worth while. It would be fine if from time to time various groups should express a desire to contribute to the departmental worship service."

"Carrying on an informal conversation," said Mrs. Johns, "is an art. Plan always very definitely and

specifically in regard to it. Know just what you expect to say, plan any questions you desire to ask, and you will find yourself free then to think of the children and their needs as you talk with them. If conversation is to prove stimulating and thought provoking, carefully formulated questions are essential."

As Mrs. Johns bade her teachers good night she expressed her very great appreciation of the way in which they had entered into this part of the work. She said she felt that every single teacher could now more sincerely and earnestly worship with the children through the use of these materials. And they knew that this was true.

Changes From the Original Plan. Worship programs having a dominant mood in mind and based on themes that will most largely contribute to the needs of primary children, or programs that help in the solution of some problem that is acutely their own, are projects worthy of considerable time and thought. Problems that arise out of the life situations of our children are extremely live and very vital, and their solution is a matter for prayerful consideration. Obviously, these problems arise from time to time, and in the first working out of programs are merely anticipated. This is why programs as outlined for the various Sundays will occasionally give place to one of another sort which is built at a later time, after the problem has arisen. These changes in program will be made by the superintendent or leader of worship when she deems a change advisable. Some vital community interest arising may occasion a change in the program as planned. Unforeseen activities of the different groups frequently make a change seem advisable.

Anticipating Worship Needs. Knowing child psy-

chology, many problems may be anticipated. Problems of selfishness are very common, and particularly at Christmas time does selfishness show itself. We anticipate this and plan that one or more of our programs at this season shall center around the thought of sharing. With this as our problem the boys and girls should look this thing squarely in the face. We find that unwillingness to share with others is a matter about which we should talk to God and seek help as best we can. Illustrations in story form of unselfishness as evidenced in some other child aids at this point—"The Jar of Rosemary" perhaps, or the Bible story of the little boy who so gladly shared his lunch of loaves and fishes. Stories, verses, and songs added to opportunities given the children for actual sharing with others, emphasize this theme and make possible communion with God and a deep desire for his approval.

The theme of sharing may extend over a period of several Sundays, reaching out from the immediate home folk and little friends near by to the far-away friends, climaxing the series with a program that has as one feature the telling of such a story as "How the Artist Forgot Four Colors." Much emphasis will be placed upon the thought of loving and giving. Offerings of varying sorts may be made—money, other gifts, or kind deeds. Verses pertaining to giving will be stressed as will any available songs that contribute to the working out of this problem of trying to be glad to share. Suggestions from the children may be incorporated into the prayer. A spontaneous prayer from one or more of the children may be possible. The children should be left with the idea and conviction that they, with God's help, can remember to share with others, that they themselves must do something about it, and not leave the reforma-

tion of themselves entirely to God who gladly helps with "the little bit you can't manage."[2]

Unity, Coherence, Emphasis. In building the programs there will be no lasting impression if it has been a choppy jumble of different things. Everything used should contribute to a natural, unified worship experience. There should be unity and coherence, obviously, but there need be also certain points of emphasis which stand out and help to make a definite impression, and one that will be sufficiently striking and lasting to motivate future conduct.

Illustrative Programs

PROGRAM I

Late November

General Aim: To further companionship with the heavenly Father.

Specific Problem: How we may thank God for his great and good gifts.

Pictures:

1. "The Garden Gate," Jessie Willcox Smith.
2. "Giving Thanks," Jessie Willcox Smith.
3. "A Mother and Child," Jessie Willcox Smith.
4. "The Angelus," Millet.

Prelude: Music of "For the Beauty of the Earth."

Call to Worship:

Leader: Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the Lord is good.

Song: "The Children's Thank You Song." [3]

("We have so much to thank thee for," etc.)

Informal Conversation about the J. W. Smith Pictures.

Why are these children bowing their heads? To whom are they saying, "Thank you"? Is it a good thing to say thanks

[2] Edith E. Read Mumford, *The Dawn of Character in the Child*, p. 165. Longmans, Green & Co., publishers. Used by permission.

[3] *Melodies*. Leyda Publishing Company.

to God for food? Yes. "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord." Shall we all say that Bible verse together? How many of you like that verse? When do we say "Thank you"? This little girl is saying "Thank you" as she runs to the gate, I think. ("The Garden Gate.") In the first picture they were thanking him before they ate. Maybe it is noontime. In this picture ("A Mother and Child") you see the little girl is kneeling at bedtime and thanking God for her day and for many things. May we too thank God at any time?

Song: "A Child's Thank You."

"Thank you for the world so sweet,
Thank you for the food we eat,
Thank you for the birds that sing,
Thank you, God, for everything." [4]

(Pictures still in evidence during singing of song.)

Leader: It is nearing Thanksgiving time and we are thinking a very great deal these days about the many gifts our Father sends us, aren't we? We are very glad and happy when we think of all these good and perfect gifts. Who wishes to name one thing for which you are thankful? (Children name bounties.)

Leader (*opening Bible*): I wish to share with you all a lovely verse that is in the Bible. Some of you know it. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father."

Response: "The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad." (Played by pianist, after which the children sing it.)

Song: "Hymn of Thanks" [5] (First verse).

Leader: Conversation and brief story of the Angelus, telling how at the close of day (every day, not only at Thanksgiving time), before they left the fields, these people paused to thank the Father. Shall we too say "Thank you" to God for his love and care.

Prayer (by Leader):

Dear heavenly Father, we thank you for all your love and care every day. We are glad that we may thank you at any time and place. Because the Thanksgiving time is near we are

[4] Elizabeth McE. Shields, set to music in *Worship and Conduct Songs.* Presbyterian Publishing Society.
[5] Danielson and Conant, *Songs for Little People.*

thinking especially of your many great and good gifts to us and we want to thank you for them. Amen.

"For father's care and mother's love,
For the blue sky and the clouds above,
For Springtime and for Autumn gay,
We thank you this Thanksgiving Day." [6] Amen.

Leader: We thank God through our words but especially by doing as He wishes us to do. He likes to have us share our gifts with others. We are going to offer our gifts now—first our money gifts, and then our gifts of fruit and vegetables that we have brought for others.

Offertory: "Traumerei," Schumann (simple arrangement). [7]

Song: "We Give Thee But Thine Own."

Prayer: Bless these gifts, dear Father, and may they make others very happy.

Prayer Song (in closing service): Morning Hymn.

"Father, we thank thee for the night,
And for the pleasant morning light.
For rest and food and loving care
And all that makes the day so fair.

"Help us to do the things we should,
To be to others kind and good.
In all our work and in our play,
To grow more loving every day." [8]

PROGRAM II

A February Program

General Aim: To help the children to become brave and courageous about the doing of hard things.

Specific Aim: To encourage the telling of truth.

Quiet Music: Music of song, "I Would Be True."

Call to Worship, Song: "O Come and let us Worship." [9]

Prayer-Song: Morning Hymn (first verse).

Leader: "How can we show God that we love and appreciate his many good gifts to us? Can someone tell us one way?

[6] From *A Child's Thought of God,* compiled by Esther A. Gillespie and Thomas Curtis Clark. Used by permission of the publishers, Minton, Balch & Company.

[7] Op. 15, No. 7, *First Studies in the Classics,* Charles W. Landon.

[8] Danielson and Conant, *Songs for Little People.*

[9] Edith Lovell Thomas, *A First Book in Hymns and Worship.*

Answer: By doing as God would have us do.

Leader: Let us give the verse that tells us how He wishes us to treat other people.

All: As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

Song: "Be ye kind one to another." [10]

Prayer: Before we speak to him, let us think of some of the ways in which we need his help. You may first suggest one thing that you would like to thank him for. Now what help do we need in doing the things he wishes us to do? (Incorporate into prayer their suggestions.)

Dear Father, we thank you for our parents and friends. Help us to be kind to them all even if we do not always feel like being kind. Help us to do the things that make other people happy. Help us always to speak kindly and truthfully to them. Amen.

Leader: We will show him our love and thanks as we now bring our offering for others.

Offertory: "Simple Confession," Thome. [11]

Conversation:

Leader: It is sometimes hard to share with others but we can learn to share our gifts. We can also learn to be thoughtful and kind and try to do what our parents wish us to do. We want to be the kind of folk that God and our parents can depend on to do the right thing even if it is hard. (Read from Bible.) "Do those things that are pleasing in his sight," "Even a child is known by his doings"; or, "Learn to do well."

Are we being kind to our parents if we don't tell them the truth always—even if they might not find out? Sometimes we have been afraid to speak out and tell about something we did. Maybe we feared they would not like us if we admitted that we broke the dish, or upset the ink or lost the dollar.

Song: "God is My Helper." [12]

"God is my helper, this I know
Whatever I do, wherever I go.
When I wake early, this is my song,
God is my helper, the whole day long."

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[10] Danielson and Conant, *Songs for Little People.*
[11] Josephine L. Baldwin, Service No. 8, *Services and Songs.*
[12] Danielson and Conant, *Song and Play for Children.* Copyright, The Pilgrim Press, publishers. Used by permission.

Story: "How Tommy Grew Brave." [13]
Prayer Song: "Help us to do the things we should." [14]

PROGRAM III

Late March or April, before Easter

Subject: "God's Beautiful World in the Spring."
Aim: To help the children to see and feel in the beauty of springtime God's care and love.

(Music, pictures and flowers to help emphasize this appreciation theme.)

Decorations: Pussy willows and spring flowers.
Pictures: A Corot, or "Spring" by Knaus, and "All Things Bright and Beautiful."
Prelude: "To Spring," Grieg; or, "Spring Song," Mendelssohn; "Spring Voices," Grieg.
Call to Worship, Song: "O Come and let us worship." [15]

Leader: "This is the day which the Lord hath made. We will rejoice and be glad in it."

Invocation: Dear Father, we thank you for the chance to come here to worship and for the beauty of this spring morning. Amen.
Music: (pianist plays music for "'Tis God Who Sends the Spring.")
Song: 'Tis God Who Sends the Spring." [16]

Leader: Let us say together the spring poem we learned from the Bible.

All: "For lo, the winter is past,
The rain is over and gone,
The flowers appear on the earth,
The time for the singing of birds is come."

Leader: He hath made everything beautiful in its time.
Song: For the Beauty of the Earth.[17] (By a third-grade class.)
Prayer: Dear heavenly Father we thank you for this beautiful world in which we live. We thank you for the flowers and the birds, for the hills and the trees and the sunshine. We thank

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[13] Louise M. Oglevee, in *A Year of Primary Programs,* Lucy Stock Chapin. (Reprinted from *Pilgrim Elementary Teacher,* August, 1921.)
[14] Danielson and Conant, *Songs for Little People,* p. 2, second verse.
[15] Edith Lovell Thomas, *A First Book in Hymns and Worship.*
[16] *Melodies.* Leyda Publishing Co.
[17] Edith Lovell Thomas, *A First Book in Hymns and Worship.*

you for your loving care in giving us all this beauty. Bless us all to-day, we pray. Amen.

Prayer Response:

A Prayer Song.

"Father, hear thy little children
While to thee we pray,
Asking for thy loving blessing
On this day. Amen." [18]

Leader: We have learned a verse that tells us from whom all our good gifts come. Who knows what it is?

All: Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father.

Leader: Let us thank him at this time with our gifts, gifts which we gladly share with others.

Leader: Some of us have brought flowers for friends who are not able to see the beauties of springtime. We will bring them forward with our money gifts.

Song: Offering Hymn.

"Since my heavenly Father gives me everything,
Lovingly and gladly now my gift I bring." [19]

Offertory Music: "Voices of Spring," from "Melody in F," Rubinstein.[20]

Solo: By a Junior Friend.

"The world is glad, the world is bright,
With sunny day and starlit night;
The seasons flit with wondrous change,
The earth holds treasure deep and strange.
When spring's sweet odors fill the air
My soul would lift itself in prayer.
By the sweet length of summer days
I'd measure forth my hymn of praise." [21]

Story: "The Boy Who Discovered Spring." [22]

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[18] *Melodies* (use one verse only). Leyda Publishing Company.

[19] Danielson and Conant, *Songs for Little People.* Copyright, The Pilgrim Press. Used by permission.

[20] *Carols.* Leyda Publishing Company.

[21] Julia Ward Howe, *Hymnal for American Youth.* H. Augustine Smith. The Century Company, Publishers. Used by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.

[22] Raymond MacDonald Alden, *Why the Chimes Rang.*

Song: "This is My Father's World." [23]
Closing Prayer—Song: "Lord of the Sunlight." [24]

Lord of the sunlight,
Lord of the starlight,
Lord of the seasons,
Teach me to know
How best to love Thee,
How best to serve Thee
Mid summer's flowers
Or winter's snow.

PROGRAM IV

Fellowship and Worship

This program will indicate the manner in which worship may naturally follow fellowship, showing no clear line of demarcation between the two. Occasionally workers in the Primary Department look at their watches and think, "We have five minutes for fellowship." At the end of five minutes, again consulting the watch, they decide, "*Now* the worship service must begin." The following informal service of worship grows out of and follows immediately upon the period of fellowship which has served as a preparation for the worship.

A Missionary Theme

(In connection with a Japanese project)

General Aim: Being a friend.
Specific Aim: Being a friend of the Japanese children. Leader informally greets the children and teachers, suggesting that we all say good morning. "Would you like to shake hands with someone near you?" she asks.

Leader: We might sing a good morning song, "We're Glad to Say Good Morning."

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[23] Maltbie D. Babcock, *Hymnal for American Youth.*
[24] Isabel Fiske Conant, in *Songs for Little People.* Used by permission.

"Good morning! Good morning!
We're glad to say 'Good morning.'
This happy day we'll work and play
But first we'll say, 'Good morning.'" [25]

Leader: Here's James back with us again. We've missed you, James. Have you been sick? And Lois is here—and Helen. Shall we all sing a welcome to James and Lois and Helen. We are indeed glad they are back again

Song: "Little Song of Greeting."

"How do you do? Welcome to you!
Welcome, dear children, to you!" [26]

Mary remarks that a new little girl has come to-day, and all stand and say, "We welcome you, Louise."

Leader: We are so glad to have our old friends back, and we are also glad to have a new friend, aren't we? How many of us enjoy friends, I wonder? Haven't we a song we can sing about friends?

Song: "Friends." [27]

John says, "I helped my friend yesterday. I carried some chairs into the new house they were moving into."

Leader: Yes, we all like to be helpful. We have some friends who are far away too.

This reminds Maud that she brought some more pictures for the booklet she is making for the Japanese friends, and this information she shares with the others and thus they have brought up the subject of the far away Japanese friends.

Leader: I'm sure we are all very glad God has given us friends. Shall we bow our heads and say "Thank you" to God because he has given us our friends?

Prayer: We thank you, God, to-day for our friends, here, and also for our Japanese friends who live far away. Amen.

Leader: What verse in the Bible tells us that Jesus wants us to love other people? Who remembers?

Answer: "Love one another."

Leader: Shall we say that verse together?

Leader: Does anyone remember a verse that tells about a

[25] Danielson and Conant, Music in *Song and Play for Children*. From *Kindergarten Review*. Milton & Bradley Company. Used by permission.
[26] Danielson and Conant, *Songs for Little People*. Copyright, The Pilgrim Press. Used by permission.
[27] In *Worship and Conduct Songs*, by Elizabeth McE. Shields.

new commandment he gives us? "A new commandment I give unto you that ye love one another."

Leader: And when we love others we try to be very kind to them. Let us sing, "Be ye kind one to another." [28] As Miss Harris plays this for us again let us sit very quietly and think how we can be kind to our Japanese friends.

Informal Conversation: What can we do?

Answers: Send gifts—make things—write letters—help them build kindergartens—send missionaries to tell them about Jesus, etc.

Leader: What do we wish most of all to tell them?

Answer: That Jesus loves them too.

Song: "Whisper Song." [29]

Leader: The missionaries have taught them the song, "Jesus Loves Me." I wonder if they know the song we sing about the stories of Jesus. Let us sing it now.

Song: "Tell Me the Stories of Jesus." [30]

Leader: If our books could talk, what would they say about why we made them? Yes, they would tell them that we love them and want them for our friends. How else can we let them know we do love them? What else can we do for them?

When we bring our money and put it in the "For others" side of our envelopes that helps send the "Whisper Song" to them. That money sends the missionaries, and they tell them that we love them and want them to be friends, and they tell the Japanese boys and girls of God's great love for all. God wishes us to be happy and glad to give our gifts to others. What verse in the Bible tells us that? "God loves a cheerful giver."

Offering.

Offertory: Music of "Gifts of Love." [31]

Song Response: "Gifts of Love," author unknown.

"Father, bless the gifts we pray thee.
Give them something sweet to do.
May they help someone to love thee.
Father, may we love thee too." Amen.

Brief Conversation: (Getting children to express themselves).

Leader: We have been thinking about all of our friends to-day.

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[28] Danielson and Conant, *Songs for Little People.*
[29] Song Card, Neidlinger Publishing Company.
[30] Edith Lovell Thomas, *A First Book in Hymns and Worship.*
[31] *Ibid.*

What are some of the reasons why we are so happy to-day? Yes, we are happy to know that God has given us friends. We are glad that God loves us all. He loves the children everywhere. Shall we sing "The Father's Care"? [32]

"All the little children,
Wherever they may be,
In this land of sunshine,
Or far across the sea,
Have a loving Father,
Who, with tender care,
Watches o'er the children,
Here and everywhere."

Prayer: Dear Father, we thank you for friends everywhere. We wish to be very kind to all of our friends, both here and far away. Help us to remember to be helpful and kind always. Amen.

For Discussion

1. State the fundamental principles involved in building a program of worship.

2. From what sources would you get your materials for building a department program of worship?

3. State the value in frequently having several of the children with a leader work out programs of worship for the department.

4. Do you consider the following statement true or false? "It is necessary to have a carefully planned program of worship for each session."

5. Build a program of worship suitable for your own group, choosing a subject or problem upon which to base your choice of scripture, songs, etc.

For Further Reading

Method in Teaching Religion, George Herbert Betts and Marion Hawthorne, Chapter XVIII.

[32] Danielson and Conant, *Song and Play for Children*. Copyright, The Pilgrim Press, publishers. Used by permission.

Art and Religion, Von Ogden Vogt, Chapter XVI.
Manual for Training in Worship, Hugh Hartshorne, Chapter X.
At School with the Great Teacher, Jeanette E. Perkins.
A Year of Primary Programs, Lucy Stock Chapin.

CHAPTER IV

THE ATMOSPHERE FOR WORSHIP

"If a place satisfies the inborn hunger for the beautiful, children and young people are apt to come to it, without being always able to give the reason for so doing. A spirit of order, good will, and obedience grows in such an atmosphere." [1]

An attractive, restful room to which children love to come offers an environment conducive to good will, order, and also to reverence. The room in which children come together for group worship should be cheerful, homelike, restful, orderly, and as attractive as possible. An environment that seems almost to inspire order and reverence, an environment that is conducive both to worship and work, should be our objective. In such an atmosphere is one best able to feel God's presence, whereas in a noisy, untidy, unattractive room the child responds with less desirable reactions.

The magnificent edifice known as the First Methodist Church in a great city contrasts strikingly with the room in the Parish House provided by this church for little children—those children in their most impressionable age. The visitor coming from the church auditorium, upon entering the room known as the Primary Department room, is quite unprepared for the scene that meets her eye. In the large, barren room, devoid of comfort or beauty, she cannot for a single moment picture a group of six-, seven-, and eight-year-olds, and yet, in a few moments, in they come, dozens

[1] Frederica Beard, *Pictures in Religious Education*, p. 32. Copyright by George H. Doran Company. Reprinted by permission of Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., publishers.

of them, coming in to sit with feet dangling on large collapsible chairs meant for adults. Their arms are stretched upward in an endeavor to use the tables, much too high for them, even with the high chairs. Not having racks of any sort for their hats and coats and big galoshes, the coats and hats either are kept on in the somewhat overheated room or are tumbled down upon their work tables, luring the sometimes envious eyes of little girls who happen to possess less lovely Sunday hats. There are no pictures on the walls, probably because there is almost no wall space in this room where a picture could be hung. In such a room as this, is it any wonder that the children—too many for a single group anyhow—fail often to respond to the appeal of music, prayer, or story? These children are not even comfortable. Who can be comfortable with feet unable to touch the floor; and, moreover, what primary boy is not tempted to experiment with a collapsible chair just to see what will happen?

Factors in Securing Atmosphere

Pictures, Pets, Plants. Contrast this scene with another, in a near-by and less wealthy community. One enters to find the group scattered about, sitting around low tables on chairs that were designed for little boys and girls. These low, firm, substantial chairs have been recently painted by the teachers in the Primary Department on various evenings as they met to talk over the work of the department. The attractive chairs and tables against a background of ivory make a pleasing appearance that seems to be felt by the group, so busily and quietly at work, even before the real opening session. Their activities, as well as their comfort, prepare the children for the worship period that is to fol-

low. There are several well-chosen pictures on the walls of this room, placed low enough so that the children may really see, and not get a distorted vision. The picture of "Christ in the Workshop" seems particularly in harmony with the scene before us of these children busy upon their various projects. There are colored curtains at the windows, and the sunshine streaming through these curtains, which were made and dyed by the third-grade girls, sends over the room a glow that seems to speak of God's love and care. There are tasteful vases of flowers placed on the superintendent's desk and on the piano, and several gold fish play about in a bowl on a low table near by. This bowl of fish is a gift and is taken care of by a brother and sister in this department. Some potted plants are seen in a window-box that has, on a Saturday afternoon, been painted and decorated by one of the boys' classes. We notice a number of temporary mounted pictures placed low down on the screen, and these, we find, have been arranged by three of the girls. We discover one large water-color picture, apparently in the process of completion, and are told this is being done by a first-grade group. A poster illustrating the verse, "For, lo, the winter is past," we notice, is placed on the dado. In a case we see a number of tall glass jars that have been painted green by some of the children, and one of these is made use of by Mary, who comes in with a bunch of dainty pussy willows, and a few first-leaf buds. This cheerful, sunshiny room belongs in a very real sense to that little group of children and teachers, who in a few moments quietly put away their work as the pianist plays for them a few soft chords. The children then bring their little chairs down to the front near the piano; and the superintendent sits down too, quite in-

formally, in a chair facing them, but nearer the piano, and says to them, "Are we all ready now to listen to some music?" They are ready, and thus these children and teachers listen together and are prepared for the call to worship which follows, as the superintendent then stands before the group.

Beauty. The room in which primary children meet should be just as attractive as it is possible to make it. This does not necessitate the spending of a great amount of money in making it beautiful, but it does take time and thought and love. There should be in that room some growing thing—a potted plant, seeds that the children have planted, a bird to sing for them, or a gold fish—something alive to care for and love. There should be a few framed pictures on the walls, not many, as the children are distracted by many, and a few will be more meaningful. These can be changed occasionally, if it seems best to do so. There should be plenty of light and air in the room, and this means it shall not be overcrowded. It is true men have been known to worship on the street, in the heat and turmoil of a factory, in the hurry and push and distraction of a crowded subway; it is also very certain that the atmosphere of such places is not conducive to worship, and that when they do worship it is in spite of rather than because of their environment. Children are more suggestible than adults, and naturally we wish them to have the very best in the way of atmosphere that can be given them—a clean, orderly room being quite essential, and as much comfort and beauty as possible.

Comfort. In making a room comfortable, we should seek to procure chairs of the right height for primary children. During the general service of worship, at which time the whole group will probably remain in the

room, the chairs may be placed together toward the front of the room, and near the piano. It may be necessary to use these same chairs for class work about the tables, but primary children can easily and quickly learn to carry chairs to the place where they are needed. It seems a much wiser plan in most cases to bring the chairs together than it does to let the children remain around the tables, even though they turn the chairs to face the front.

Sometimes it is necessary to put part of the group in another room, and it usually is best to separate the first grade from the others, when it seems necessary to divide them. In some churches this has proved a helpful arrangement, since there is quite a decided difference in the capabilities and appreciations of first and third-grade children.

Attitude and Participation of Adults. In this room, made as lovely as love for little children can make it, gather together adults and children who are to work and pray and sing together for a little while. These adult companions or friends of the children we call teachers and officers. To create a happy environment, one that inspires reverence and order, it becomes necessary that these older members of the group become very really members of the whole group, and also of the little group, their particular charge. This means that the teachers and officers, just as truly as the children, are to enter whole-heartedly into the spirit of the service. How difficult it seems for some teachers actually to worship through the use of primary materials! But, on the other hand, how more than important it is that we do learn to worship with the children. Some teachers apparently have not recognized that the worship service in the Primary Department is not for the little children

alone, but for all. We sometimes have felt that we were "putting on" a worship service—indeed, we glibly talk of the worship service we "put on last Sunday"; and perhaps that is just the very reason why Billy and Jane and Mary failed all that next week to live a little more as Jesus lived.

It is only as teachers are sincere in their desire to help children enter into the spirit of worship by really worshiping with them, by praying and singing themselves, that they can expect that their influence upon the group will have any very real results. Not a few officers and teachers of Primary Departments have, moreover, considered the worship period a time when cards, envelopes for the enrollment blanks, and materials of various kinds might be quietly passed about, halting their arduous labors, be it said, during the few moments of prayer. Is it to be wondered, then, if John and Harry feel also that they too may be privileged characters, and so fail even to assume an attitude of worship? The instrumental music, songs, stories and offering are acts of worship as well as is the prayer, but it takes some of us a good many years to realize it in deed as well as in truth.

Freedom from Distractions. Not only the moving about of officers and teachers, but all other distractions are to be carefully avoided. No environment is conducive to worship that is not fairly free from distractions. It is not easy for an adult to keep from turning around to see who enters a room late. If we will observe, we may find that we do just this sort of thing ourselves. Imagine, then, the effect of the entrance of late-comers upon a six-year-old! Can we dare to hope that there will be any children in the room who can maintain close interest and attention upon the thing

we have for them while other children are being constantly admitted? It is for this reason that we find it unwise to admit late children or teachers during the worship service, except at a definite time when all who have been standing outside the door may then quietly take their places. There are many other distractions, both of sight and sound, and it is necessary for best results that these be eliminated as far as possible. It has sometimes been found necessary to change the time of the period of worship, so that there would be no singing of an older group in a near-by room to distract attention. In a certain church school the young people met in the room next the one used by the Primary Department. This group of young people had an orchestra that played during the first twenty minutes of the Sunday-school hour. Obviously, it became necessary to make a change somewhere. Mrs. Smith, the primary superintendent, decided to let her children work upon their project at the time when the orchestra played, and this arrangement seemed to be quite satisfactory. It had some other advantages too. The change did away with late-comers for worship; and it seemed that the children were more nearly ready to worship than they usually are the minute they arrive at the church school, after the hustle and bustle of getting into their Sunday clothes.

Suggestiveness of Environment. Comfort and beauty and freedom from distractions are essential factors in environment, but are insufficient. Stimulation and suggestiveness are also essential in a room to which primary children come to worship. Some of the wonders of God's creations prove suggestive of his greatness—a butterfly just emerging from a cocoon, seeds planted and cared for by the children, buds bursting into bloom.

The wonder-worship attitude expresses itself as the child's attention is called to these creations of his. Well-chosen pictures frequently prove suggestive of God's great kindness. Another type of picture may portray definite worship attitudes of other children. Pictures of children of other countries suggest to the child friendships that should exist. Living things to be watched and cared for by the children help develop in them a more definite knowledge of One who cares for all. Gifts from our Japanese or Indian friends, carefully cared for in a case, suggest another reason for gratitude to the Father. Materials and bits of work in the process of construction, things being done for others, suggest the desirability of this sort of thing—scrapbooks being made for sick or far-away children, a large water-color painting they are working upon for another group, favors that are being made for a party soon to be given the newcomers in the department; all these things scattered about on tables as they enter, or kept in drawers or cases to be gotten out by the children, stimulate a desire to do for others, and a thankfulness to God for this privilege.

The Opportune Time for Worship

This brings before us the question as to the most satisfactory time for a departmental worship service. More and more we are trying to make worship natural and spontaneous. We cannot abruptly command the children to worship; they must have some preparation. Ordinarily, worship grows out of certain definite experiences and situations, and therefore, we may have a number of times during the church-school hour when worship arises naturally. The superintendent or the class teacher should be alive to these situations, grasp-

ing them as opportunity presents itself—not once but several times if the occasion seems to warrant it.

There should be, however, set aside a certain time, a ten or fifteen-minute period perhaps, when we aim particularly and definitely to help bring the children into a closer relationship and companionship with the Father. This fact does not mean that at no other time is there to be worship. We eagerly take advantage of any opportunity for genuine worship, at whatever time it presents itself. Our program should be quite flexible, so that this is possible. Nevertheless, we should continue to have a short period of time devoted to worship experiences for all, making use of the various channels through which we may gain this closer feeling of relationship to God. When shall we have this period? Choosing the most opportune time is a problem for careful thought and experimentation. To select the best time is conducive to the best results, and is often quite necessary for genuine worship. Many schools have tried various plans, and what fits in one group may not necessarily be best in another group. It was formerly thought an essential thing that we open the session with a period of worship. In a number of church schools, however, there is, first of all, a fellowship service, followed by worship. This seems to work out in those schools remarkably well, for the children always seem ready to listen to the opening piano selection after they have had an opportunity to greet Louise, who has been sick and out of school so long, and have welcomed Jack, the new boy who has come to join the group. This does seem to be the thing most particularly upon their minds, and they are more nearly ready to talk to their Unseen Companion and Friend after they have fellowshiped with Miss Royce, the superintendent, and with each

other. This approach seems to be a logical one, starting with them where they are and going a step further to fellowship with God.

The necessity for a certain amount of educating of parents is indicated by this remark of a mother in one of these groups: "I never have to hustle Virginia off in the morning, for Sunday school always starts late." This mother had evidently concluded that since the singing and prayer came later, Sunday school had not yet begun. She thought from her few visits that Miss Royce was just "filling in time" talking to the children instead of "getting on with the program of the day." A few meetings of mothers and church-school teachers would clear up a situation of this sort and give to the parents a better appreciation of the work that is being done, and help them in "carrying on" in the home. A letter sent out to parents, explaining quite in detail the type of work done in the school, is also very helpful.

In a school in which there is no presession work, some plan such as the above is rather necessary, that the atmosphere for praise and prayer may be created. Instead of fellowship there might be, first of all, one class period. Out of this first class period can grow a purpose, a reason for going to the Father in thanksgiving. Praising him for his many great and good gifts to us, and asking that we may in some way be enabled to help, is an obvious response. It is not so important what plan is followed as long as through presession or through fellowship, or by means of some kind of class work, there has grown a feeling among the children that they would like to talk to the Father and sing his praises and worship him with the offering of their gifts.

If the worship period immediately follows the pre-

session work there are always a few children who have not been prepared for worship, and some others are even late. When and how shall these late-comers be admitted? The secretary or a substitute teacher will perhaps sit at the door to see that these late children do not come in except when a place in the program, previously decided upon by the teachers in conference, warrants their admission. This place may be just before the story, if one is to be used, or just after one of the songs. There will be a pause while these children come in quietly to take their places. It doesn't seem quite fair to keep them out during the whole time of worship, since it usually is not the fault of the child that he is late. Another adult, when possible, may be just outside of the door to keep late-comers from loud talking. When the school is held in a one-room church in which there is not even an entrance to step into, during stormy weather the children will have to step quietly inside of the door, standing by it until the time when a pause is made for them to take off their wraps and quickly and quietly take their places. At this time the pianist will play a few soft chords or a short instrumental number, and the children who have been in their places will gradually learn to listen and sit quietly as she plays.

Prepared Leadership

Prepared leadership is one of the requisites for successful worship. If there is ever a time when care of details is essential, it is in a worship service. Everything has to be carefully planned before the leaders take their places. So often we have been embarrassed by the tardiness of that most important personage—the pianist. The superintendent has prepared for the pianist a neatly typed or written copy of the program,

giving the exact pages of songs. The pianist has carefully selected her instrumental music which must be short and not too difficult, simple, colorful melodies being just as successful and more easily listened to than the more difficult ones. Here, as in all our work, judgment and discrimination are to be used. We prefer the works of the masters, but in their more-or-less simplified forms, lest they prove too complex for the untrained ear of childhood. It takes a trained ear to listen to and appreciate some of the more modern compositions such as DeBussey's. We can scarcely expect this of primary children.

The successful superintendent is thoroughly prepared and knows exactly what she hopes to do. She is versatile enough, however, to make a change in her plans if a change seems advisable. She has carefully planned her Scripture and her prayer; she knows every word of every song she expects to use, and she has spent much time in preparation of the picture she plans to interpret or the story she means to use. She knows just the plan for the taking of the offering and her informal conversation has been well thought out. She not only has her program on paper, but also in her mind, so that she need not refer to any memorandum. If she has chosen a bit of Scripture to read, she reads it from her Bible, not from some book of primary worship programs. She is ready and prepared in every sense of the word to lead this group of little people into a definitely closer relationship with the heavenly Father. The teachers too, as they sit with their own little groups, have their responsibilities in entering heartily into the singing and general plan of the service. We can scarcely expect the children to participate more zealously than do their adult companions.

Instrumental Music

Instrumental music, either on the piano or victrola, is one of the greatest helps in creating a favorable condition for worship. This instrumental music, if of the right sort, unifies their thinking. All are listening together to something lovely. They become for the first time, perhaps, since entering the room, a really common group, unified, and all thinking in terms of something beautiful. This music creates an atmosphere in which one may recognize God, the Creator and Giver of all beauty. And thus they are ready to speak to him and to praise him and to offer him their gifts.

Preparedness of Children

Materials Adapted to Children. In thinking of the conditions conducive to real worship experiences, let us realize that all the necessary conditions are by no means external conditions. Favorable internal conditions on the part of the child are even more important and will be dealt with more fully in other chapters. Let us pause here, nevertheless, to consider the necessity for materials adapted to the needs of the children with whom they are used. A child cannot appreciate, nor grow enthusiastic about new clothes that do not fit him. Neither can he appreciate bits of Scripture, songs, or stories that are too grown-up for him. Even though his new clothes, much too large, come out of the best store in the city, he still does not desire to wear them. Because certain passages of Scripture are meaningful and beautiful to adults, and because they were chosen from the Bible, that best and greatest of all books, is not proof that those verses will necessarily appear lovely or understandable to a primary child.

Familiar Materials. Before memory materials can be used as a means to a worship experience, they should be familiar to the children. Many associations should have been established with the materials, and motives provided for their memorization, so that they may not only have significance for the children but may become aids or channels by means of which the group may more really fellowship with God.

For Discussion

1. List the conditions in your own Primary Department which make it difficult for your children to worship in the large group. In the class group. Can you do anything to improve these conditions? What can you do?

2. Describe an ideal primary room. Have you ever seen a primary room which you consider quite ideal? Because you cannot attain to the ideal now, or even in the next few years, are you to become discouraged and feel that worship for your group is impossible? What do you intend to do about it?

3. What can you do toward securing orderliness, neatness and comfort in the room, and an uninterrupted period for worship?

4. Can you do anything to add touches of beauty? Can the children help in this project?

5. Do you believe that good will, order, obedience, and reverence grow in an atmosphere of beauty?

6. Is space a contributing factor to the worshipful mood?

7. What have you observed as a result of the use of opening music in creating atmosphere?

8. Characterize the leader who successfully creates an atmosphere of worship.

For Further Reading

Art and Religion, Von Ogden Vogt, Chapter XII.
Training the Devotional Life, Weigle and Tweedy, Chapter VII.
The Worship of the Little Child, Edna Dean Baker, Chapter IV.
Training Juniors in Worship, Mary Alice Jones, Chapter XII.
Worship Training for Juniors, Josephine L. Baldwin, Chapter II.

CHAPTER V

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC AND PICTURES

"Take us on the quest of Beauty,
Poet-Seer of Galilee,
Making all our dreams creative,
Through their fellowship with thee."[1]

Music and pictures are so closely related that it seems particularly fitting that we consider them together. The one makes its appeal to the emotions through the eye, the other through the ear. We must not fail to recognize that the appreciation of the good, the true, and the beautiful as a manifestation of God himself has a close relationship with ideals, and therefore a very direct bearing upon conduct. Both music and pictures are art-paths toward God and both are instrumental in creating right attitudes toward Him.

Beauty

Von Ogden Vogt says, "Art is not something detached from life; it makes life and is made by it"; and again, "Beauty is one of the essential necessities of human existence."[2]

Professor Horne states, "Beauty is really a manifestation of the perfection of God."[3]

If we can help boys and girls to love and appreciate the best in music and pictures, we are making an ad-

[1] Eleanor B. Stock, "The Prayer of the Quest." Used by permission of the author.

[2] Von Ogden Vogt, *Art and Religion*, pp. 10, 4. Yale University Press, publishers. Used by permission.

[3] Herman Harrell Horne, *Psychological Principles of Education*, p. 336. The Macmillan Company, publishers. Used by permission.

vance step, and there is truly in every child a hunger for that which is beautiful.

Love of Beautiful. Donald ran into his father's study and found his auntie there. She usually wore rather plain dresses of somber hue, but this day she had on a very lovely new pink dress. Donald, forgetting his errand, looked admiringly at her and then said, "Thank you, Auntie Florence, for wearing that beautiful pink dress to-day."

"No reason can be asked or given why the soul seeks beauty. Beauty in its largest and profoundest sense is one expression for the universe. God is the All-Fair. Truth and goodness and beauty are but different faces of the same All," said Emerson.

Best in Art Must be Used. Exposure to much that is good, to much that is true and lovely, is one way of helping the child to make right choices, of helping him to sense that beauty is truth and goodness, and that beauty, real beauty, comes from God. And thus we worship him, the Giver of beauty. In seeing or hearing the beautiful, there is sometimes an almost unconscious realization of the presence of God. From beautiful objects we pass to beautiful deeds; it is only a step. We tend to become like that which we admire and love. If a thing satisfies the inborn hunger for the beautiful, children as well as adults strive for it or to be like it.

A group of children from the tenement districts of Chicago were spending two weeks at a camp on Lake Geneva. They were invited to go for a story-hour to another camp. The teacher who planned their stories had chosen to use in her lesson Sir Joshua Reynolds' picture of the child Samuel at prayer. These children looked at the picture. They almost gasped and whispered "ohs" and "ahs" were heard above the otherwise quiet

of the room. There seemed to be within them a spirit of real reverence as they were allowed to hold in their hands for a moment this copy of a masterpiece. The devout attitude portrayed, plus the real art of the picture, must surely have left a lasting impression with them.

We have seen a similar thing occur as we have taken a group of primary children to the big church to see its beauty of architecture and to hear the organ music. The children step softly and speak in hushed tones; they become gentle and reverent in the presence of beauty.

Pictures appeal to the imagination and to the feelings; music is often said to be the language of the emotions. Children are controlled to a great extent by emotions; they respond so quickly to stimuli, and are so much more susceptible than are adults, that it puts a greater responsibility upon our choice of music and pictures for them to hear and to see. It is essential that we place before the primary child only the best in music and pictures—the best we can find that will bring before them the trait or quality or attitude we hope to portray. It is while children are still very young that their tastes are being formed. They are learning to become discriminative, and unconsciously they are learning to choose between the good and the mediocre. It may not generally be difficult to choose between good and bad; but even adults find difficulty in distinguishing between good and mediocre. When we are able to help primary children to cultivate a taste for the true and the good, and to direct their ideas and tastes into a higher plane, we are in a position to help mold the ideals of a nation.

In the year 1300 Giotto painted a picture. On the

day it was to be placed on display in Saint Mark's, the shops of Florence were closed, and with songs and garlands of flowers the people followed the artist to the cathedral to witness the event.

When a people have learned to wish for and demand the best, whether in the world of art or science, they will rapidly rise above the level of mediocrity.

Appreciation and Interpretation. Music as a universal language finds its response in old and young alike, and forms the basis of a common meeting-ground. It is difficult to think what a kindergarten or primary grade would be without good music. It is in these lower grades that standards of good judgment are beginning to be formed. It is here that children first learn to listen to music, and it is here that they may discover that they can understand what the music says. Six-year-old Margaret was chatting with a juvenile friend, while mother practiced a Chopin prelude[4] to which the child had been taught to listen. She stopped rather abruptly in her play and conversation as she recognized the music. "Listen, Helen," she said. "That is the part where Chopin is trying to tell us about something he is thinking so hard about—he just can't stop thinking about it. Listen. There it is again—the same thing."

After the Chopin "Prelude" mother decided to play Grieg's "March of the Dwarfs," which she intended to use in week-day school the next week. In a few moments the two girls came into the room, marching with stooped shoulders and halting step, imitating as best they could the little dwarfs themselves. It happened that this selection had also been previously explained to Margaret, for whom it now had signif-

[4] Op. 28, No. 15; Prelude—Chopin.

icance. In a moment she had interpreted it for Helen, who at once got the idea, and together they interpreted, in their play hour, this music. They had learned thus early the important truth that they could understand what the music was saying.

In these early years children are discovering that music can become to them a means to express a great joy or to realize a beautiful experience. The lovely things of which they know they often find paralleled in music. Music need not remain to them an unknown language. They learn to exercise judgment and to discuss the relative beauty of various selections; they choose the particular part of the selection that they consider most beautiful. They hear selections over and over in connection with the moods they parallel and in connection with certain of their own experiences.

Louise and Ruth had been taken out calling. They were both unusually restless and in no mood to sit quietly and listen while mother and her hostess talked on many and varied subjects, not in the least interesting to active girls of five and seven years. They succeeded in becoming most annoying to the somewhat distracted mother. The hostess, an understanding mother, went to the sun-room. Putting on a record for the girls, she said: "This is a march from 'The Nutcracker Suite,' by Tschaikowsky. It is supposed to be a march of many, many different kinds of toys. You girls may stay out here now if you wish as you listen to the music. What toy do you want to be, Louise?" Louise decided she'd be a big clumsy toy elephant and walk very, very slowly, while Ruth was a little tin soldier who kept perfect time as he marched to the music. The girls had found an outlet for their suppressed energy. The music had provided a means to

them of expressing themselves in the mood it paralleled, an experience in which they found delight, and peace and quiet were by-products of the process.

A prevailing idea among some church-school workers has been that the only great purpose of music in the church school is that of reaching the child by some lesson expressed by the words of the song. That is only a part of the big value and purpose of music—true, a worthy objective, but only a part. Our fault has been in not "carrying on" and reaching out into the very lives of the children with the music itself.

If it is true, as someone has said, that education is what we have left after we have forgotten the things that were taught us, it seems particularly true of music education. If children are able to develop, while with us, a power that will lead them on and on, into future self-cultivation, they may then be able to bring joy, truth, and beauty into their own and into the lives of others. We cannot set music off at one side. It must be related to life itself, and then it becomes vital. The appreciation of the best in music and pictures plays an important part in the long process of building ideals, and has a direct bearing on conduct, partly because we tend to become like that which we admire. The cultivation of the emotions, considered to-day to be so very important, can nowhere find a more direct disciplining and training than in the field of art. Through music and pictures the child gets some comprehension and feeling of that sense of perfect correspondence which all of nature seems to reveal, and which is ultimately beauty. Beauty comes from God, and there must be in our lives personal contact with much that is true and good and lovely, if we are to love the best.

There is much variety in the kinds of available music.

In worship periods, use is made not only of well-known songs, but of instrumental music. It is best to have had associations built up with instrumental selections that are used during a worship service. The first instrumental number used in the worship service should be very carefully chosen. It may be that the children need quieting, or perchance stimulating, depending upon the day and the conditions. This first number paves the way for what is coming; it helps save the worship value that is expected by producing quiet and expectancy. This calm, peaceful quiet unifies their thinking and helps to bring about a consciousness of God's presence. There is no more effective way of creating the right spirit for praise, prayer, and song than by using some sort of instrumental music—a song without words.

Listening Lessons

As an important phase of our work, we may occasionally have a listening lesson. We realize that in life there is far more opportunity for listening than for performing, just as we see more pictures than we could possibly paint. Most of our children will later be members of the listening group, rather than the artists themselves. Let us zealously arrange for them helps that will fit each to some extent for the part he will play in later life. Listening is an art to be acquired, but of such moment as to be worthy of time taken for this particular piece of work. This applies more particularly to week-day and vacation schools and to the homes, since there is ordinarily but very little time on Sunday that can be given over to this, although a certain amount may be done even on Sundays especially if we lengthen the hour into two or three. Through listening to, and through learning what to listen for, and in

realizing that the piano actually talks, children can learn to read into music the meaning it can have for them, and thus find in instrumental music that has a simple, beautiful, reverent message, an avenue for a genuine worship experience.

Learning to Listen. There must be activity of mind if one is to appreciate. Problems provoke one to think, and, therefore, during a period of training (not during the actual period of worship) there should be some problem or stimulus in order to help the child to understand and appreciate the music he is to hear. Our purpose is to provoke children to think, or they will probably not learn to care for the music or the picture. It does not to any appreciable degree increase a child's appreciation simply to say, "Isn't that beautiful—now listen!" nor does it help him to understand the mood and spirit of a given selection to ask, "How did that make you feel?" Such vague questions do not bring results.

How much more thought-provoking it would be to listen to a selection and watch two pictures to see which one it is more nearly like in its different moods. To suggest that they stand, look up, or raise hands when it reminds them of the picture in the leader's hand may prove stimulating.

The Brahms "Lullaby" might be softly played, as the children watch two Madonna pictures. The "Feruzzi Madonna," in which the baby is sleeping, and the Raphael "Sistine Madonna," in which the baby is awake, serve to illustrate. "Which one is it more like now?" may be asked at certain points. When the music is very soft the children will naturally watch the sleeping baby. Always afterward in the minds of these children will be an association of that lullaby with Madonna pictures.

This is to be done during the training period, but later, during the Christmas season, the instrumental music may some Sunday be the Brahms "Lullaby" which will call to mind the Madonna pictures. Through the use of this familiar instrumental music the children are now prepared to worship in its use. This may become an inward silent worship experience as they worship God who gave his Son.

Teaching appreciation, in the minds of many, assumes such gigantic proportions that the average teacher in the church school says to herself: "Oh, it can't be done—there isn't time. I can't do it." It takes so little time; it can be done; and we, the church-school teachers, can do it! If we have but a feeling for line and color, we have our basis for appreciation ourselves; and having real appreciation in our hearts, we long to direct the children. Sometimes with simple folk melodies, a few curved lines on a blackboard, phrasing the selection for the children as it is played help:

The leader may use on the blackboard a colored chalk, changing to a different color when the sentence or phrase is not a repetition of the first; that is, A always blue; B, pink. This helps children to detect which parts are repetitions and when the melody is different. "Londonderry Air" and "Ash Grove" (Welsch) can easily be phrased in this way as they are played. Sometimes slowly phrasing a simple melody by lifting and lowering of the hands is a helpful device, and helps the children really to hear the music. Having had some

training in learning to listen and hear, later use of music in worship may become possible.

The Nevin "Narcissus" became meaningful to a number of primary children, who, early in the springtime, were each given a narcissus bulb by their class teacher. They were told how to care for the bulbs, and they finally brought them to the week-day school on a certain day to be given to "shut-ins." At that time the superintendent told them very briefly of the myth of Narcissus, and played on the Victrola the Nevin selection by that name, letting them raise their hands at the place in the music where Narcissus seems to be nodding his head. They listened for that place in the music and nodded their heads in time with the music, and watched their own narcissus plants which they had brought to make others happy. An association was built up in their minds, never to be entirely forgotten.

In connection with the music of the song "For the Beauty of the Earth" with a third-year class can be shown Corot's "Spring," or "The Lake," or some other picture of that type. Later when the song is used in worship, earth's beauty will be a natural association, since the music already has that meaning for them. Corot's picture of "Spring" links up well with Grieg's "To Spring," or the Mendelssohn "Spring Song," either of which may be later used in the worship period. Needless to say, when an instrumental selection is long, a portion only may be used with primary groups for actual worship.

A part of Mendelssohn's "Fingal Cave" Overture may be used with second- and third-grade children. The story of its origin might be briefly sketched for them before the selection is played. Mendelssohn visited at one time the Hebrides Islands. The sound of the water

dashing against the rocks fascinated him. He listened as it sometimes rushed against the rocks and again as there seemed to be a quieter movement. He thought to himself, "Why, this is music," and he went back to his home in Germany and wrote it down as it had sounded to him. In this connection two sea pictures are often used—one a calm, quiet, restful scene, the other a picture of a rough scene. The question, "Which is it like now?" as the children watch the pictures and listen to the music on the piano or Victrola, stimulates thought and attention as well as interest in the music and pictures. Later, in a worship service such a selection that has become meaningful to the children will be listened to with interest, as they think of the beauty of sight and sound that God has given us. The music not only attracts their attention and unifies their thinking, but through the avenue of sight and beauty of tone may come a real religious experience.

The Worship Experience

To make this worship experience a reality, however, it is best that there be built up in the child associations with God's gifts. MacDowell's "To a Wild Rose" can be used at the time of roses and will usually mean more if associated in their minds with the flowers it is supposed to typify. A short arrangement from Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata" will be full of significance and meaning even for the small folk, after they have heard how it came to be written. The picture illustrating this sonata may be used in connection with the story and the presentation of the music. Later a short portion of the sonata may be used as opening music, during the taking of the offering, or during a very brief period of silence or meditation.

Careful Selection

For purposes of worship, music should be of intrinsic worth, being always true to the laws of its own being; it should be correct and beautiful in form and should show always a proper balancing of rhythm, melody, and harmony. The over-accentuation of any of these elements will obviously destroy the value as a material of worship. Popular music, so called, overemphasizes the rhythmic element and so becomes merely exciting. It is so easy to forget the susceptibility of children when we choose music for them to hear. We forget that an impression is always left upon them, and it behooves us to let that impression be of the best. Mary Louise, eight years old, was at the piano. Mother, listening, could scarcely recognize the tune she was playing. It sounded only half familiar.

"What are you playing, dear?" she called from upstairs.

"Oh," replied the little daughter, whose older sister was fond of broken rhythm and played it frequently, "I'm just jazzing a little on the 'Holy Night.'"

The sensitiveness and susceptibility of children put upon the adults under whose daily guidance they come a greater responsibility than we are wont to think. We have heard church-school pianists occasionally make of a fine, dignified piece of music something wholly unsuited for worship purposes.

The Response to Pictures. Wisdom in the selection of music and pictures for children calls for something better than mere haphazard methods of selection. Time and thought must be given this phase of our work. Nothing can so truly produce a worshipful atmosphere as a picture which contains the very spirit of worship.

Frederica Beard, in *Pictures in Religious Education,* says, "Besides helping to create an atmosphere in which the worship of a group of persons can be rightly carried on, they may be directly suggestive of attitudes to children, not by emphasizing any one form or position, but through the expression of an outgoing spirit of joy, adoration, penitence, or supplication to One above and beyond the worshiper; they may also signify a need, and so teach something of the meaning of worship, or some phase of it, as for instance, in showing gratitude for a particular gift."[5]

Pictures such as "A Mother and Child" and "We Give Thee Thanks," by Jessie Willcox Smith, "The Angelus," by Millet, "Samuel," by Joshua Reynolds, are of the type directly suggestive of attitudes of worship, and preach a lesson in a more realistic way, perhaps, than a story does. Then there are those pictures not suggesting definite attitudes of prayer, but none the less worthy of use in worship services. Pictures which show God's love and care serve to illustrate: "Two Mothers and Their Families," by Bouguereau, standing out as an example of this. In portraying to primaries Jesus as the friend of little children "Christ Blessing Little Children," by Hofmann, can scarcely be omitted. It is every child's right to have an opportunity to worship through the use of this particular picture, and its use seems peculiarly appropriate at Easter time in connection with the thought, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son."

A type of picture serving to bring out the beauty of God's great world in which we live, and love, and work and play, is likewise useful in creating a spirit for wor-

[5] *Pictures in Religious Education,* p. 35. George H. Doran Company. Reprinted by permission of Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., publishers.

ship; although if it is merely landscape, it may, when used alone, sometimes fail to hold the interest of children in this age group. Pictures containing life and action appeal much more strongly. This fact accounts for the displacing by some primary teachers of Hofmann's "Head of Christ" and substituting such pictures as "Christ in the Workshop" or "Christ Blessing Little Children."

Placing Pictures. Wall pictures, and those used with the entire group in worship must be of good size and so placed that they can easily be seen by all. A low position is quite necessary for children. Pictures large enough to use with the entire group in worship, if good enough to be desirable, are often rather expensive. In this respect teachers who are near a city library are quite fortunate, for there they have abundant choice, and may select their pictures and keep them out for a month. The pictures used should be good art, for gradually these six-, seven-, and eight-year-olds are cultivating a taste for art; therefore the pictures we use ought to stand the test of years in order to meet their growing appreciation. Having selected wisely and well, it seems apparent that they should be placed where children can really see and enjoy them.

Early Training Essential

To wait until our children are in their teens before we train them to find the joy of the beautiful in music and pictures is to fail perhaps utterly, in this attempt, It is while they are primary children that their tastes are being formed. Teaching appreciation for the best in all art is one of the most effective means of helping develop, cultivate, and strengthen right emotions, and leads ultimately to wise choices for leisure hours.

"Had I but two coins," said the prophet Mohammed, "with one I should buy bread, with the other hyacinths, for hyacinths feed the soul."

We may find among the works of the masters both music and pictures that will be of great and permanent value in the lives of children. The appreciation of great music or pictures, those works of art that have stood the test of time, has an influence on mind and character that it is scarcely possible to overestimate; and it is well that our educational systems, both in public and church schools, are beginning to recognize this and to embody it in practice.

Instrumental Music

Prelude Op. 28, No. 15, Chopin—*First Studies in the Classics*, compiled by C. W. Landon.

Prelude Op. 28, No. 7—*A First Book in Hymns and Worship*, p. 89. Edith Lovell Thomas.

Little Cradle Song, Schumann—*A First Book in Hymns and Worship.*

Now the Day is Over—*Songs for Little People.* Frances Wild Danielson and Grace Wilbur Conant.

Evening Praise, Service No. 2—*Services and Songs*, Josephine L. Baldwin.

Simple Confession, Service No. 8—*Services and Songs.*

Serenade, Schubert, Service No. 9—*Services and Songs.*

Moonlight Sonata, Beethoven, Service No. 14—*Services and Songs.*

I Know That My Redeemer Liveth, Handel, Service No. 28—*Services and Songs.*

Largo, Handel.

Traumerei, Schumann—*First Studies in the Classics.*

Melody in F, Rubinstein—*Carols*, Leyda Publishing Co.

Spring Song, Mendelssohn—In many books or in sheet music.

To Spring, Grieg—Sheet music.

Spring Voices, Grieg—Sheet music.

To a Wild Rose, MacDowell—Woodland Sketches.

Sweet and Low, Barnby—In many song books.

RECORDS

A suggestive list to purchase for appreciation. Many can be used for Worship.

Columbia Records

A-3094—10-inch, 75c. Prelude in A Major—Chopin; Morning Mood—Grieg; Minuet (excerpt)—Boccherini; Andantino, "Raymond"—Thomas.

A-3093—10-inch, 75c. Berceuse—Delbuck; Berceuse—Opus 22, No. 3—Karganoff; Minuet in G—Beethoven; Andante Célèbre, Opus 14, No. 2—Beethoven.

A-3119—10-inch, 75c. All Through the Night (Traditional); Sweet and Low—Barnby; Lullaby—Taubert; Cradle Song—Taubert. (Played by Columbia miniature orchestra, supervised by Louise Birch.)

A-3095—10-inch, 75c. Sleep, Baby, Sleep; Rock-a-Bye Baby; Lullaby—Mozart; Cradle Song—Schubert. (Played by Columbia miniature orchestra, supervised by Louise Birch.)

A-3159—10-inch, 75c. To a Wild Rose—MacDowell; To a Water Lily—MacDowell; Narcissus—Nevin (Violin, Cello and Harp).

A-3159—10-inch, 75c. Little Sandman and Lullaby—Brahms; Mother's Song—Kucken; Golden Slumbers—Traditional.

A-3117—10-inch, 75c. Serenade (St. Saens) flute, cello, harp; Célèbre Minuet—Valensin.

A-3164—10-inch, 75c. Ash Grove (Welsch Folk Tune); Londonderry Air—Irish; Theme from Ninth Symphony—Beethoven; Greeting—Mendelssohn.

Simple Form Studies. Theme and Variations in E Flat (Haydn).

A-3118—10-inch, 75c. Bird Calls. A day with the birds (Mourning dove, vireo, cuckoo, owl, mocking bird). Spring Birds—Blue bird, red-winged blackbird, purple finch, thrush (hermit, olive backed and wilson).

Victor Records

64103 The Brook—Powell.

Victor Marches

19607-B March (from Alceste)—Gluck; March (from Nut-Cracker Suite)—Tschaikowsky; Soldiers March—Schumann.

PICTURE LIST

A few of the many lovely pictures that may aid in the development of worship experiences.

The Angelus, Millet.
Giving Thanks, J. W. Smith.
We Give Thee Thanks, J. W. Smith.
A Mother and Child, J. W. Smith.
The Garden Gate, J. W. Smith.
Tulip Time, J. W. Smith.
Grace Before Meat, Chardin.
Pilgrims Going to Church, Boughton.
The Infant Samuel, Reynolds.
Jesus in the Carpenter Shop, Hofmann.
Christ in the Workshop, François Lafon.
Christ Blessing Little Children, Hofmann.
Christ Blessing Little Children, Plockhorst.
The Triumphal Entry, Hofmann.
Christ's Entry into Jerusalem, Plockhorst.
The Lost Sheep, Soord.
The Arrival of the Shepherds, Lerolle.
Madonna and Child, Raphael, Sichel, Bodenhausen.
Two Mothers and Their Families, Bouguereau.
Feeding Her Birds, Millet.
Child Helping His Mother, Charles Scribner's Sons.
The Ingathering, Richter.
Spring, Knaus.
Piper and Nutcrackers, Landseer.
An Interesting Family, Carter.
Sparrows, Laux.
Sheep of Berry, Bonheur.

For Discussion

1. How do you account for the statement sometimes made, that it is as dangerous to err in teaching beauty as in teaching truth?

2. Can you recall instances in your own life in which beauty in one of its many forms raised your standards, and perhaps influenced conduct?

3. List five piano selections suitable for use with primary children.

4. Suggest one or more pictures which might fitly be used in connection with each instrumental selection you have listed.

5. Comment upon the suitability for primary children of the following pictures: "Hope of the World," by Copping; "Head of Christ," by Hofmann; "The Angelus," by Millet; "Arrival of the Shepherds," by Lerolle; "Jesus in the Temple," by Hofmann.

For Further Reading

Teaching Music from an Appreciative Basis, Louis Mohler, Part II.
Creative Music, Mrs. S. M. Coleman.
Music and Life, Thomas W. Surette.
The Spirit of Music, Edward Dickinson.
The Use of Pictures in Religious Education, Frederica Beard, Chapters I, II and III.
How to Show Pictures to Children, Estelle M. Hurll.

CHAPTER VI

HELPING THE CHILD TO WORSHIP THROUGH THE SERVICE OF SONG

"O come, let us sing unto the Lord."

Singing is a natural form of expression for a primary child. Indeed, there is perhaps no part of a program in public or church school to which the children lend themselves with such utter abandonment as to the service of song. Their normal, natural response to the right type of songs is indicative of the responsibility that is ours—that of keeping before them, during this period when standards are beginning to be formed, only songs worthy of a place in their lives.

A Language of Worship

Singing is a means of self-expression. During the worship periods we are desirous of giving to the child as many avenues as possible for the expression of worship experience. There is no self-expression more natural to a child than singing; and, therefore, it is our privilege to help him build up a repertoire of the sort of songs which may parallel desirable moods or worship feelings. Naturally, we must create the atmosphere, set the stage as it were, but having it set, the child should have at hand the songs that will express the thing that he is feeling at the moment. If we have stirred the child's emotions, we must provide an outlet for them. He has it in song. Our aim, we may say, is to determine what songs are best fitted to convey the

emotions of the children in worship, and how such songs may best be used as a natural mode of expression.

In January the little family had moved into a new apartment, one much larger and more attractive than any Mary Ellen had ever seen before. She liked everything about the new home. She went from room to room admiring the mirror doors, the lovely lamps, the fireplace, and all the things she saw about her. As she knelt for her prayer that first evening, one sensed the fact as never before that music—song—is more nearly the language of the emotions than any other single thing. Her heart was too full for verbal expression. She bowed her head, and instead of talking to God in her usual manner, she sang:

"We have so much to thank thee for,
Our heavenly Father, dear,
For home and love and tender care,
Through all the happy year."[1]

Singing can mean much to individuals, singing alone as Mary Ellen did, and it can mean much to groups of children. Singing is, perhaps the most social of all the arts, since it most readily admits large numbers in its production. Perhaps no other art is so universal in its appeal as is the art of song. Every child may have a part in the singing, and consequently he will enjoy and will derive much benefit from this part of the program. Children need a language of worship, a mode of expression for religious feelings and desires. Not only is song a medium through which religious desires or aspirations may be expressed, but the association of melody and words tends to make a truth impressed through song more lasting, else the thought might as

[1] From *Melodies*. The Leyda Publishing Company. Used by permission.

fitly have been given only as poetry, or in conversation or story form.

Standard for Selection

To make the truth given in song of real value, however, the tune must be suitable and appropriate so that it may aid in making the impression lasting and worth while. In "The Church,"[2] by Jessie Gaynor, the music is stately and purposeful, and with the depth, richness, and color given by the harmony in the simple accompaniment is a song that becomes significant and meaningful to groups of primary children. Some teachers have objected to the words "ding, dong, ding," and these may be replaced by the words "come, come, come." The quiet reverent tone of the third verse seldom fails, after proper presentation, to gain a reverential response from the group.

Melody Adapted to Words. "God Sends His Bright Spring Sun"[3] and "All Things Bright and Beautiful" contain words that naturally call for a bright, light type of melody, and we have this type of music for these particular songs. In Brahms' "Lullaby" the music itself sings a lullaby, and the words given in *The Mother-Teacher of Religion,* by Anna Freelove Betts, called "Bethlehem Lullaby," are remarkably well suited to an arrangement of this lullaby. This song may be used most successfully with primary children at Christmas time, in connection with such a picture as Murillo's "Adoration of the Shepherds." In that lovely Christmas song by Grace Conant, "Why Do Bells for Christmas Ring?"[4] the accompaniment seems to speak

[2] Danielson and Conant, *Songs for Little People.*
[3] Eleanor Smith, *Songs for Little Children.* (First verse adapted to primary groups.)
[4] Danielson and Conant, *Songs for Little People.*

continuously of bells ringing, the introductory notes giving the effect of chimes most effectively, and yet so simply that any pianist can play it. In the closing mood,

> "Therefore bells for Christmas ring,
> Therefore little children sing."

after the sweetness of the story has been impressed through both words and music, the atempo movement again comes in with the first theme repeated—the melody in the answer, "Therefore bells for Christmas ring," being a repetition of the melody of the question in the first lines. The artistic quality of this song is so marked that it seems fair to say it is one of the loveliest Christmas songs ever written for primary children. If children object to the expression "little children" it may easily be changed to "happy children."

To help us to realize the effectiveness of music well suited to the words, let us examine for example, the adult hymn, "Into the Woods My Master Went." If it is unfamiliar, an interesting plan would be first to read carefully and thoughtfully the words; next, sit down at the piano and play the music, thinking the words, and see the increased significance and effectiveness because of the music.

As we endeavor to make for ourselves a standard for the selection of songs to use with our children in worship, there are several things to consider. If a song is to be useful or any more effective than poetry, the music will necessarily need to add something, and this it cannot do unless it is adapted to the words of the song. The music should, therefore, reenforce the text by expressing in melody with its emotional appeal the same sentiment that the words say.

Children possibly suffer more than adults from incongruous settings for the words they are asked to sing. The Lord's Prayer has been taught to them set to music that is in reality a two-step. Miss Baldwin tells of a prayer beginning, "Dear Redeemer Jesus, Holy" that was set to a rollicking march tune, and the children were expected to march as they prayed and sang this song. "If the music is unworthy, it matters not how fitting the words."[5]

Melody Adapted to Voices. The melody should be suited to the words, and also fitted to the children for whom it is selected. Music that is too complex or difficult for the untrained ear of childhood can well be set aside for future years. If the music is not adapted to the range of their voices, it is unsuitable. One of the simplest and easiest ways of testing music is to notice if it is all written on the lines and spaces of the staff, that is, from E to upper F. This is considered by many authorities the range of the primary child's voice, high, light tones being easiest and best. Songs touching an occasional B or C below the staff will in all probability not injure the voices, however, if lightly sung. A few songs excellent in every other way for children, are written too low, but the pianist may be able to transpose the music. It is often a good plan to sing unaccompanied, especially at the "music period" or a "training in worship period." Tones are then apt to be kept light and soft—at any rate, the leader can more easily detect from which children the harsher tones are coming, and can give some individual attention, perhaps during a presession period, to these louder voices.

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[5] Josephine L. Baldwin, *Worship Training for Juniors*, p. 98. The Methodist Book Concern, publishers. Used by permission.

Music may be a bird note, the rippling of a little brook, the lapping of waves, the sighing of the wind; it may be produced by a piano, a violin, or a Victrola; but no music is sweeter than the softly modulated voices of little children singing together. No one who has learned to know and love the flutelike quality of the little child's natural tones, will permit primary children to sing in the raucous tones that have been heard at some church schools, and which not a few teachers seem to think is the only type of singing of which the primary child is capable. A group that is not singing softly and sweetly has, no doubt, frequently heard from the leader of the song the admonition, "Now let your voices out! I want to hear your voice, James"—and James in turn, does his best to produce the desired volume of sound. This is not only bad for their voices but detracts from the spiritual value of their singing.

Variety as to Mood. The music should not only be adapted to the words and to the range of voice of primary folk, but the songs used should have sufficient variety as to mood and rhythm. It is a mistake to feel that children cannot worship God through the use of music that is bright and colorful. Such a song as "All Things Bright and Beautiful" often finds unusual response in primary groups. When the day is bright and fair and summertime is fast approaching, if the leader has succeeded in making the children feel that the beauty of the little flowers and birds is a gift for which to praise and thank the Father, such a song has a very real contribution to make. There are distinctly different types of songs used even in worship, but each one, to meet the test for desirability, should have a certain amount of variety in its make-up.

In a certain primary department the short Easter

song entitled "Easter Day" was used. "Each flower lifts up its face to say, 'It's Easter Day, Glad Easter Day, It's Easter Day.'"[6] This particular melody has very few changes in it, the intervals being extremely close, up to the final climaxing words, "It's Easter Day." Marjorie was but one of a great many children who failed to be able to enter into the spirit of this song. She said: "It isn't pretty. It sounds all alike." The superintendent knew that there really was sufficient variety in mood for these words. How had she failed in her presentation? she wondered. During the intervening days between the time when Marjorie had voiced her disapproval and the following Sunday, Miss West thought and planned how she could present the song, in such a way that the music would more adequately voice the sentiment expressed by the words.

On the next Sunday, during a worship training period, she talked to the group of the way the little seeds are planted, and how they sleep for a long, long time lying deep under the soil. The sun shines to warm them, and the raindrops come to make them grow, and finally one day they are up! The music tells us about these sleeping seed babies as they try to lift up their little faces, and almost we are amazed, when one day they are truly up out of the ground. For elation and joyousness, the musician usually makes use of wide intervals, and in this song it comes fittingly, only at the very end.

Words Worthy. Another question to ask ourselves when selecting a song for primary worship is, "Does it stand the test as good literature and possess lyric quality?" So often we think almost any words will do for little children if they are but set to music. We

[6] Danielson and Conant, *Songs for Little People.*

seem to feel that the music can be a kind of screen to hide bad verse which we would not consider using as poetry. If the words cannot stand on their own merit, if they are not worthy to stand alone, if they could not be recited as poetry, they are not worthy to be used in song. The words should have some literary value.

Thought Meaningful. Perhaps the most important test of the song suitable for primary worship is that the thought expressed by the words, to have significance and meaning, should be something within the life experiences of the children. If they cannot understand and really mean what they are asked to sing, are we not training them in a form of insincerity?

"If the hymns which boys and girls are asked to sing deal with experiences which are entirely foreign to them, either one of two results will follow: they will form the habit of singing sacred songs with a careless indifference to thought, and so lose perhaps forever one of the most valuable aids to worship, or else they will become morbid or hypocritical through singing words which they cannot understand or mean."[7]

There can be no feeling of worship when a child fails to comprehend what it is all about. Nor can a third-grade husky eight-year-old boy have a very keen sense of reverence while singing about "his little hands and his little feet," even though those same hands and feet, according to the song, may be doing kind deeds for the Father.

Many songs written for children express symbolism which the concrete-minded child is entirely unable to appreciate or interpret because he accepts everything literally. The song, still used in some primary schools,

[7] Mary Alice Jones, *Training Juniors in Worship*, p. 105. The Cokesbury Press, publishers. Used by permission.

about "precious jewels," we can see is entirely beyond the comprehension of these boys and girls.

"Jesus wants me for a Sunbeam," "Jesus bids us Shine," "God make my life a little light" are songs expressing thoughts in a symbolic way, and, difficult as it may seem to many who for years have used and loved these songs, if we are to offer children the things that can mean most to them as they grow under our care and supervision, we find we shall have to replace these and many others of similar kind with songs which the children can mean and understand. How much more helpful and meaningful is the song:

"Lord of the sunlight,
Lord of the starlight.
Lord of the seasons,
Teach me to know
How best to love Thee,
How best to serve Thee
Mid summer's flowers or winter's snow."[8]

And how much meaning there is for a small boy or girl in this "Whisper Song":

"I want to send a Whisper Song
Across the waters blue,
And say to all the children there,
Jesus loves you, Jesus loves you."[9]

Such songs as these he can understand and can mean, and they contain just as much of hope and desire and aspiration as the other ones which he utterly fails to grasp because of the symbolic language. The missionary or fellowship service can become, if not actual worship, a normal preparation or basis for the worship experience. Any song that may be an incentive to a

[8] Danielson and Conant, *Songs for Little People.* Used by permission of the author, Isabel Fiske Conant.
[9] By Florence Scott Hurst. Used by permission of Richard Hurst.

child to live a better life or act a little more kindly, easily leads to the act of worship.

In summarizing, then, the tests or standards for the selection of songs for primary boys and girls, we may ask ourselves at least these five questions:

1. Is the music adapted to the words of the song, and are both suited to the group for whom chosen? Does the music re-enforce the text?

2. Is it within the singing range of the primary child?

3. Has it variety in mood and rhythm?

4. Does it stand the test as good literature and possess lyric quality?

5. Is it within the experience and understanding of the children? Can they mean what they say?

Presentation of New Songs

The song used with the primary group may meet every test and yet fail, because of improper presentation, or because it is only partially known when the attempt is made to use it in worship. One secret of successful worship is a correct training in the elements that aid in bringing about worship experiences. This training is sorely needed in most church schools. We hear it said, "But we haven't time on our program to present carefully all new materials!" The answer is that when the time is limited to an hour on Sunday there is very little time for any part of the program. If, however, we really believe worship to be an important and essential part of the church-school program, we shall have to arrange the program in such a way that we can have some time for the presentation of worship materials, a time when we do not expect worship experiences. So far as possible new songs as well

as other worship materials should key in with group activities and give worshipful significance to them. This is less difficult of accomplishment in schools in which practically all the activities of a grade are under the direction of a single teacher with her assistants. In such a situation the experiences of the entire group while in a common enterprise, give birth to and reason for the need of certain worship materials, at which time they may be presented in connection with the experience. In situations in which we do not have this newer and more closely graded system, it is not always possible to present new materials in connection with group activities, and especially is this true in the smaller and meagerly equipped schools. To teach a song at a time when its presentation in connection with related experience is most opportune cannot always be done. This is due to a number of conditions including leadership and equipment. Singing of one group may seriously disturb other groups, so that presentation, practicing, and future use of songs must necessarily be at a time when all the children assemble together. This period may be called the worship-training period, the new-song period, the music period, or general assembly. This method conserves time and also gives opportunity for using the one member of the faculty who is most capable of teaching songs. It does, however, lack in being as natural as it can become when arising out of a real situation, a situation which may have called for the very thought expressed by the song. A real background situation can, however, often be developed even with the whole department. Because of numbers and less intimate contacts, there may not be the significance in a presentation to an entire department that is possible with a small group when new songs grow in con-

nection with a situation which was the occasion for introducing the song. The question of when to present the new song material will have to be treated in accordance with conditions in one's own particular surroundings. When schools have two class periods the "training in worship period" sometimes comes as a break between the first and second class periods. Ideally all new materials are first presented in relation to experience. This is often in the class groups. After a motive for learning a song has been established, it may then be worked upon by all during the music period or (if so designated) a "training in worship period." But, whenever the time comes, and regardless of the name given it, the all-important task of the leader is to make every minute count. There is frequently altogether too much time wasted in church schools, and with the short time at our disposal we can ill afford to lose one moment. Possibly the group that meets on Sunday meets also during the week. If so, the week-day would be an admirable time for some music appreciation as the melodies are played and the children listen, and the practicing of new songs that the whole group will wish to use together in worship.

Method. After carefully considering what song is worth teaching, our next step is to plan the method of presentation. In making our plan we will consider the children themselves, the length of time we may feel justified in using for the teaching of the song, and the type of song we have selected. Naturally, each song demands individual treatment as to the detail of its teaching. Occasionally the effect of a song is spoiled by attempting to follow any stereotyped method of presentation. In a general way, however, the process of teaching songs falls under the following heads: (1) Ap-

proach. (2) Presentation. (3) Possibilities in the song, and (4) Conclusion.

Under circumstances in which the presentation does not grow out of present experience in group activity, the teacher's first problem is to create the proper atmosphere through pictures, poetry, stories, drawings, conversation or known songs, and by means of leading questions. We will aim to arouse in the children a sense of need for the expression which the song provides. A picture such as Jessie Willcox Smith's "We Give Thee Thanks," with a little conversation about God's gifts and a question or two, make a suitable approach for the praise song,

> "We thank the heavenly Father,
> We thank the heavenly Father,
> We thank the heavenly Father,
> Kind and good."[9]

After the approach comes the presentation proper. The song is sung entirely through, this first time for sheer enjoyment, and as simply as though a story were being told. It is often a story in song. The song is then sung through again, but previous to this singing a problem has been given the group, something to listen for. We want to lead the children to think, as only by that means will they be able to learn and gain any definite impression and lasting results. The problem may be to listen for a particular thing, to be able to answer a specific question, or possibly to watch two pictures to see which one the song is more nearly like. One of the most irksome tasks facing a small child is that of sitting still and letting someone else do a thing. It is not so difficult to sit still and listen, however, if he

[9] Danielson and Conant, *Song and Play for Children*. Copyright, The Pilgrim Press, publishers. Used by permission.

has been set a task, if his mind has been directed along a certain course not in the least boresome, such as is just listening. In the song, "'Tis God who sends the Spring," such an incentive as this—"Quietly lift your hand when you can tell us who it is that is singing with delight," will hold the attention and interest even through a second singing. When the song has more than one verse, only the verse that is to be taught that day need be sung the second time, but it is well to let the first singing give the impression of the song as a connected whole. Songs that are extremely long will be omitted, or only a part used. After the second singing by the leader, the song may be broken up into parts where necessary. If it is a short, simple song, the children may be able to sing it after hearing it twice. There may be a repeated phrase which they easily learn, and with that phrase we might begin. Perhaps the group will listen a third time, singing this time with the leader only on the repeated phrase.

We must avoid spending too much time on the phrase-by-phrase method, but neither should we allow parts to be incorrectly sung. Insisting that the children listen while the teacher sings is really the best way to be sure that there will be no inaccuracies later on. The leader may become the audience while the children sing, or one class may sing while the other classes listen, to vary the plan and to be certain of every phrase. At this time we must endeavor to make clear any unusual words. Poetic forms such as "maketh" or "doth" mean nothing until explained to the children. Sometimes a word or expression seems so simple to us we forget that it may be new to someone in the class.

Elizabeth, who was only six and had always lived in a large city, came home from vacation school in the

small town where she was spending the summer. "Mother, what is a cattlehome?" she inquired. Elizabeth thought it was a new kind of automobile, but didn't know. Mother too seemed mystified. "Sing the song in which the word was used," said mother, and Elizabeth sang the words "driving the cattle home." Elizabeth knew the word "cows" but not the term "cattle." The song had probably not been made clear in its presentation through pictures or conversation, or else the small girl would quickly have sensed the meaning of the new term.

If the songs are later to be used in worship, it is self-evident that all new expressions must first be cleared up in the minds of the boys and girls. A visitor remarked to Mrs. Hall, who had charge of a Primary Department: "I do so enjoy hearing your children sing. I can always understand every word they say." "That," said Mrs. Hall, "is simply because they themselves understand every word they are singing."

Either before or after the song has been learned there may be possibilities in it for other correlated activity which may help impress the truth of its lesson. "Possibilities in the song" may be taken up at some other day than upon the day the song is presented, or at times, with some songs, may be entirely omitted. Under this head we include (1) dramatization, (2) story told or written, (3) pictures drawn or cut, (4) poster or booklet prepared.

"Hymn of Thanks"[10] has in it great possibilities for poster or booklet making. Pictures from magazines representing a home, father, mother, friends, hills, trees, and flowers may be cut out and brought in and made into a booklet for the parents or for some child in

[10] Danielson and Conant, *Songs for Little People.*

a hospital. This makes purposeful, attractive and constructive work and leaves with the boys and girls who participate a lasting impression of those gifts of the Father.

If we wish to do so, we may consider "possibilities in the song" as a part of a longer approach, and begin the teaching at that point. The suggestions given in regard to "Hymn of Thanks" may be worked out before the song is sung to them the first time, making the song the culmination of a piece of work in which the thoughts of thankfulness for home, father, mother, hills and trees have been stressed; or the making of the booklet may follow the learning of the "Hymn of Thanks" which may have had a different approach.

The fourth and final step is the conclusion. This is the thing that ought to make the song live and have a real meaning and place in their lives; it is the clinching of the nail. Under this head may be included a problem or problems in correlation with the home life of the child, or with other related subjects. To illustrate this final step, let us think of the "Whisper Song" of which mention has been made. As a problem in correlation with home life, this song suggests in its essence that the children could plan to help send the *Whisper Song* across the ocean, by saving for this purpose their nickels and dimes, instead of using them for ice cream cones and candy. This thought has, no doubt, been frequently expressed before the teaching of the song. Now it comes up again, in a new and interesting fashion, as a problem for us—a way in which we can send this "Whisper Song" to other boys and girls.

This plan works very successfully with songs in general, but each song demands that we conscientiously and meticulously plan its particular treatment; and if it

needs little said about it, as in such a song as, "O Come, and Let Us Worship,[11] we need not follow the suggested plan.

In teaching the song, "I Think When I Read That Sweet Story of Old," the story and the Hofmann or Plockhorst picture of "Christ Blessing Little Children" are sufficient materials.

Sending home copies of the words after the presentation of a song is an excellent scheme. This not only interests and informs the parents, but aids the children in memorizing the words. Obviously, all teachers in the room should learn the new songs so that they too may enter into the worship when the new song is used.

"Winter Hymn" is a type song and can be taught on a cold, snowy, winter's day. This song is a series of four pictures, and after a little conversation as to the cold day, our need of warm coats and mittens, the beauty of the white blanket or cloak of snow all about us, we may produce the pictures. The first is a snow scene, and shows in picture what we see all about us; the second is a picture of sheep and lambs with their warm, protecting coats God has given them; the third is a picture of birds showing their coats of feather; and the last a group of happy children in a home eating together.

By means of conversation, a few questions and pictures, the boys and girls are ready to hear a song that tells about all these things. As the song is sung, the appropriate picture may be held that the group may both see and hear. The song is sung through a second time, this time giving them first a problem, something to listen for. "Lift your hands when you can answer this question in the words of the song, 'Why does he

[11] Edith Lovell Thomas, *A First Book in Hymns and Worship.*

give the bird a coat of feathers?'" The words "o'er," "doth," "sheddeth" and "spreadeth" will necessarily need explanation and help in saying them. All difficult intervals will need extra work. If in the first showing of the picture of sheep the word "fleece" is used, the term will probably need no further explanation. This song lends itself well to the carrying out of the third step, the possibilities being numerous. The boys and girls will enjoy drawing pictures or cutting them from magazines to illustrate for someone God's care of all his creatures.

As to the final step—the conclusion—the children may be asked to try to see how many of God's creatures they can discover during the next week, in picture or reality, and to notice in each case how they were provided by the heavenly Father with warm coats for cold winter days.

Choice. There are so many lovely songs that it seems we ought not to waste time upon trivial ones. Was it not Ruskin who said, "If I read this, I cannot read that"? It is just as true of the songs we desire to use. If I teach this, I haven't time for that. We must learn to make wise choices. When there is more than one setting for words we wish to use, we should ponder over the various tunes, trying to decide which seems best adapted to the words. "Away in a Manger" has several melodies from which to choose. It seems when there are so many different tunes that we could afford to save the Spilman air for "Flow Gently, Sweet Afton." It is a pity not to allow association to be built up with certain of the old-home and folk songs that the children will undoubtedly learn later somewhere, and, when possible, we prefer not to use those airs for other poetry.

Our songs are chosen from so many different sources that a scrapbook of the used songs for the pianist becomes almost a necessity—at any rate, a wise plan. In this loose-leaf scrapbook may be kept the songs already known; and new ones will be added from time to time. The pianist, needless to say, is a most important person. We have previously spoken of the significance of her delightful task and of the certainty of the fact that in her hands lies the power to make or mar the beauty of a departmental worship service.

Number of Songs to Teach. The question as to how many new songs to give depends entirely upon local conditions and the amount of time that may be given over to this important phase of the work. It is dependent also upon the ability of the leader of song to accomplish much in a short space of time. In vacation or week-day school, when there are several hours each week devoted to the religious training of children, more songs for use in worship may be learned than in one hour a week on Sunday. But even in the limited time of the Sunday session a dozen new songs for worship can be well learned during the course of the year. There is need for enough of new materials to give variety and add interest, but at the same time we must keep in mind the fact that there is a lure about the old, very familiar songs that the children have grown to love. Watch the eyes brighten at the very thoughts of singing together at church school, "Can a little child like me thank the Father fittingly?"[12] This is perhaps one of the best-known and best-loved primary songs. The lure of the familiar and very well known is strong in every child, and yet he must not have an overdose even of that very appealing and highly desirable song.

[12] Danielson and Conant, *Songs for Little People.*

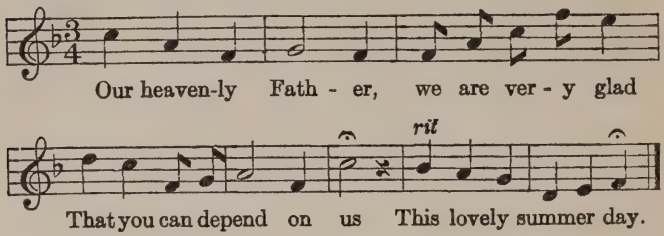
Creative Expression

In all of our work with the children we must take cognizance of the fact that the real purpose and reason for presenting these materials is to provide for the children a language of worship, a means whereby they may be enabled to express themselves. If, however, there can come from the children's own minds, out of their own creation, material for worship, we are more than happy; and we will aim to encourage and not to stifle and suppress attempts on the part of the children to express their thoughts in their own way. The more freedom and spontaneity there can be, the less stilted and more real becomes the worship.

It was real love and thanksgiving that prompted Mary Ellen to sing in her own fashion with her own tune, the words, "I love my mamma so." "Oh, thank you, heavenly Father, for my mamma and my daddy dear."

In a vacation school a group of boys and girls had worked and played and sung and prayed together every morning for nearly two weeks. It had been a happy time, as they had worked so joyously in trying to make their room lovely and in learning to become the kind of boys and girls that can be depended upon always. Mrs. F had "depended" upon them to do their share every day. "Depending upon each child" had become a sort of keyword to the two weeks' work. A suggestion was made one day that each child might, before the next session, make up a little song of his own and have it ready to sing, and thus to share it the next day with the others of the group. Mrs. F was depending upon each child to do his best. Margaret, who was just eight, asked mother to write her melody down on

paper, so it could be played on the piano. She was very decided on every phrase—it had to be just as it had sung itself to her, to express just what she wished. The



gladness of the song rings in the lightness of the melody in the third measure. The little song seemed to express precisely what was the prayer of every child in the room, and so the group decided they would all like to learn Margaret's song, that they might sing it as a closing prayer each day that week.

This group of boys and girls had had that most valuable preparation that any primary group may have for worship—the sharing of experiences in godlike living, from which worship normally develops. Out of this experience in actually living together and in trying to be dependable had grown the little worship song. Right conduct leads to worship just as surely as it results from worship. The child who has done right is capable of having a more complete fellowship with God, as a result. Worship grows out of experience, out of concrete situations.

Songs for Mixed Groups

In cases where it is absolutely necessary that the primary children worship with older groups, there are many lovely, simple hymns that are not too difficult for primaries, and yet can be enjoyed by the older members

of the group. "Lord of the Sunlight," "For the Beauty of the Earth," "Holy, Holy, Holy," "Enter Into His Gates With Thanksgiving," "May Jesus Christ Be Praised," "This Is My Father's World," much of the Christmas and Easter music and many short responses are illustrations of this type of song.

Recognizing the far-reaching effects of songs and the necessity for right choice in their selection, and realizing that what a child sings vitally touches his entire life, we should plan to make a careful study of this phase of his training, and endeavor continually to devote as much time to the preparation for song as is given over to any other part of the work.

Said an old-time philosopher: "Give me the making of the songs of a people, and I care not who makes their laws."

Suggestive List of Good Primary Songs

Praise, Prayer and Adoration

O Come and Let Us Worship—*A First Book in Hymns and Worship.*

Response: Praise Ye the Lord—*Melodies.*

Response: The Lord Hath Done Great Things—*Melodies.*

The Children's Thank You Song—*Melodies.*

Praise Him—*Songs for Little People; A First Book in Hymns and Worship; Primary and Junior Hymnal.*

For the Beauty of the Earth—*A First Book in Hymns and Worship.*

The Children's Thanksgiving Hymn—*Songs For Little People.*

Children's Day Song—*A Year of Primary Programs*—Chapin.

Thank You, Father—*A First Book in Hymns and Worship.*

This is God's House—*Songs for Little People; A First Book in Hymns and Worship; The Child's First Songs.*

The Church—*Songs for Little People.*

Winter Hymn—*Songs for Little People.*

Can a Little Child Like Me—*Songs for Little People; A First Book in Hymns and Worship; Primary and Junior Hymnal.*

To Be Sung as Prayers

Father in Heaven, We Thank Thee—*Worship and Conduct Songs.*
Morning Hymn—*Songs for Little People.*
Hymn of Thanks—*Songs for Little People.*
Lord of the Sunlight—*Songs for Little People; Primary and Junior Hymnal.*
We Thank Thee—*The Child's First Songs.*
A Prayer (Christmas)—*A First Book in Hymns and Worship.*
We Thank Thee, Loving Father—*Songs for the Little Child.*
At the Family Table—*A First Book in Hymns and Worship.*
A Child's "Thank You"—*Worship and Conduct Songs.*
Thank You, Father—*Worship and Conduct Songs.*

Offering Hymns

We Give Thee But Thine Own—*Songs for Little People; Hymnal for American Youth.*
Since My Heavenly Father—*Songs for Little People; The Child's First Songs.*
Bless This Gift, Dear Father—*The Child's First Songs.*
Gifts of Love—*A First Book in Hymns and Worship.*
A Gift from the Children—*A First Book in Hymns and Worship.*

God's Loving Care

He Cares For Me—*Primary and Junior Hymnal; Songs for Little People.*
He Sees—*Songs for Little People.*

His Beautiful World

All Things Bright and Beautiful—*Songs for Little People.*
Fair Are The Meadows—*A First Book in Hymns and Worship.*
This Is My Father's World—*Hymnal for American Youth.*
'Tis God Who Sends the Spring—*Melodies.*
God's World—*Worship and Conduct Songs.*

Jesus—Our Example and Friend

I Think When I Read that Sweet Story—*Songs for Little People; A First Book in Hymns and Worship; Primary and Junior Hymnal.*
Tell Me the Stories of Jesus—*Hymnal for American Youth; Song and Play for Children; A First Book in Hymns and Worship; A Year of Primary Programs*—Chapin.

Jesus, Friend of Little Children—*Primary and Junior Hymnal; Songs for Little People.*
Gentle Child of Nazareth—*Song and Play for Children.*
When Jesus Was a Little Lad—*Song and Play for Children.*
Come Unto Me (missionary)—*Melodies.*
Why Do Bells for Christmas Ring?—*Songs for Little People.*
Silent Night—*Songs for Little People; A First Book in Hymns and Worship.*
Christmas Carol—*A First Book in Hymns and Worship; Carols.*
Manger Hymn (Five arrangements in the four books)—*Songs for Little People* (2 arrs.); *A First Book in Hymns and Worship; The Child's First Songs; Songs for the Little Child.*
The First Easter—*A First Book in Hymns and Worship.*
Children's Easter Praise—*Songs for Little People.*

Helpful Relationships—Conduct and Missionary Songs

A Prayer for Help—*Worship and Conduct Songs.*
Be Ye Kind—*Songs for Little People.*
Friends—*Worship and Conduct Songs.*
My Father and My Mother—*The Child's First Songs.*
Whisper Song—*Neidlinger Song Card;* (*Melodies* and *A First Book in Hymns and Worship*—different Melodies).
All the Little Children—*Song and Play for Children.*
God's Children Live in Many Lands—*Song and Play for Children.*

Birthday Songs

Birthday Greetings—*Melodies.*
A Birthday Greeting—*Songs for Little People.*

Note—This list of songs, while not presuming to be an exhaustive list of suitable song material, is here given because the author has used and found these songs to be of value with the primary-age child. Some of them may, perchance, be found in other books than those named in this list, but this will give at least one source and may be of assistance in case the song to be used is difficult to locate.

For Discussion

1. Do you consider true or false the following statement: "Goodness is effectiveness. A thing is good when it fulfills the purpose of its existence."

2. What is your opinion in regard to first using as "quiet music" the melody of a song you expect subsequently to teach to the group?

3. Do you believe that it is a good plan to have the words of a new song that is to be taught written on the blackboard, or on manila paper, so that they may be before the children during the presentation of your song?

4. Comment upon the following words for primaries:

"God sends his bright spring sun,
To melt the ice and snow,
To start the green leaf buds
And make the flowers grow."[13]

5. Comment also upon the second verse of the above song, which is as follows:

"God sends his love to us
To make our goodness grow,
May we be sweet like flowers
That in the garden grow."

6. List fifteen songs. Criticize them in accordance with the standard for selection given in this chapter.

7. Select a song and plan in detail how you would present it.

8. What do you consider the best time for presenting new songs? Give reasons for your answer.

For Further Reading

Method in Teaching Religion, Betts and Hawthorne, Chapter XVIII.

Training the Devotional Life, Luther Allan Weigle and Henry Hallam Tweedy, Chapter IV.

The Training of the Devotional Life, Meyer and Kennedy, Chapter VI.

[13] Elizabeth Peabody.

Books of Songs:
Songs for Little People, Danielson and Conant.
A First Book in Hymns and Worship, Edith Lovell Thomas.
Melodies, Leyda Publishing Co.
Carols, Leyda Publishing Co.
Song and Play for Children, Danielson and Conant
Song Stories for the Sunday School, Mildred and Patty Hill.
Songs for the Little Child, Clara Belle Baker.
Worship Songs for Primaries, Mrs. Crosby Adams.
The Child's First Songs, Olive Ogelvee.
Worship and Conduct Songs, Elizabeth McE. Shields.
Primary and Junior Hymnal, Heidelberg Press.

CHAPTER VII

SCRIPTURE AND STORY MATERIAL

"The story—a work of art, a message of beauty, a creator of ideals."[1]

"Please tell another story—just one more." Familiar to every mother and to every teacher of children are these words. All children, both grown-up children and little folk, love the story. It makes a universal appeal. Possibly this is true, primarily, because the story makes truth vivid and attractive. One of the great purposes of the story, as of painting, sculpture, or music, is to give pleasure to the listeners or readers of the story. Every mother and every teacher longs to possess the art of story telling. "God speaks to the child through stories, and happy the teacher or mother who learns to work with God."[2]

Suitable Story Material

Feeling Element Strong. A story in which the feeling element is strong makes a vivid and lasting impression upon the child. We may have forgotten the details of certain stories we heard as children, but because of the emotional appeal, the impression as a whole remains. It is for this reason that truth expressed in story form becomes colorful, attractive, compelling. In stories suitable for telling in a service of worship, the emotional element is especially pronounced. If the

[1] Margaret Eggleston, *The Use of the Story in Religious Education*, p. 21. Copyright by George H. Doran Company. Reprinted by permission of Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., publishers.
[2] *Ibid.*, page 17.

emotions have been stirred, the impression made by the story tends to be lasting, and improved conduct may be the result. The right type of story may create a desire to give, to do, to serve, as does no other single factor.

Unity of Impression. A good story usually unfolds a single predominating incident. All unnecessary detail will be carefully, artistically, avoided. In the artistic short story there is no word used that does not directly contribute to the single effect that is to be achieved. This characteristic, together with the other necessary elements of a story, a short, attractive introduction, plenty of action, plot, usually a single chief character, originality, plausibility and finality, help to create unity of impression which cannot fail to be effective. To make desirable traits appealing and gripping with lasting effect, any short story must produce a sense of this complete unity in the mind of the reader or listener. The story depends for its unity of impression and for its power and charm to a great extent upon (1) characters, (2) plot, (3) setting. Story-telling addresses itself usually either to the pleasure of assent or to the pleasure of wonder. It is but a step from wonder to worship. The story that stands the test as good literature and at the same time provides suitable material for primary folk, the story that makes a lasting impression and helps develop right attitudes, the story that creates a deep desire to be like the hero of the tale, will be joyful, positive, constructive, and a unity.

As a Preparation for Worship. The story is sometimes used just previous to the regular and definite period of worship. It then becomes an adjunct to put the child in a frame of mind so that he can worship; it becomes his preparation for worship. It may create a suitable atmosphere so that worship becomes more easily

possible. It may also set the problem which is the specific occasion for the worship.

If our aim, for example, is to lead the children to see in the beauties of nature at springtime God's love and care, if the dominant note is in regard to God's beautiful world in the springtime, we can prepare the child for this theme of appreciation which we aim to develop, by the use of Carolyn Sherwin Bailey's lovely story of "The Road That Wanted To Be Beautiful."[3] The story in this case would be used to arouse within the child such an appreciation of God's goodness that to worship is the most natural thing to do. He is easily led to praise God in the singing of such a song as "For the Beauty of the Earth" and he can more feelingly, understandingly, and worshipfully repeat, "God hath made everything beautiful in its time." As he says these beautiful words he means them, and he can heartily enter into a prayer of thanks for God's gifts of beauty to us, his children. He will be glad also to show his thanks to the Father by bringing his gifts. Because of his story preparation, he more gladly worships as he gives what he can to show God his love and appreciation for his many beautiful gifts. How meaningful will become this offering hymn as he sings:

"Since my heavenly Father
Gives me everything,
Lovingly and gladly
Now my gift I bring."[4]

As the gifts are being collected the pianist may be softly playing Mendelssohn's "Spring Song" or some other appropriate selection which will add to his joy-

[3] Carolyn Sherwin Bailey, *Out Door Story Book.*
[4] Danielson and Conant, *Songs for Little People.*

ousness in being able to help. As he joins with the other children in singing, "All Things Bright and Beautiful," "Fair are the Meadows," or "'Tis God Who Sends the Spring," how heartily he can rejoice and how meaningful will become each thought expressed because of adequate preparation! He understands and worships, as he prayerfully sings in closing,

"For the Springtime thou dost send,
For the warm sunshine and rain,
For the birds that sing again,
For the sky so clear and blue,
For this happy Sunday too,
Hear us thank Thee."[5]

An appropriately chosen story may admirably lend itself to the preparation of a group for worship. It sets the stage, it creates the right spirit, giving the listeners more receptive minds and creating in them a desire to praise the Giver for his many good gifts.

As a Material of Worship. The story that portrays a great ideal may be used, not as a preparation for worship merely, but as an element in worship. Before the session Harold broke a model that Grace had made. He seemed indifferent and Grace was angry. The worship that day found its climax in the story of the little maid from Samaria who was so kind and loving that she helped her master to be cured of a terrible disease though it was his soldiers who had stolen her from her home. The hush as the story ended showed how truly the children were worshiping as they realized the beauty of forgiving love, and as they went to their classes Grace and Harold smiled at each other.

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[5] "A Prayer for Each Season," *Stories for Kindergartens and Primary Schools.* Ginn and Company, publishers. Used by permission.

The story of "Little Garden Flower"[7] lends itself to use on a worship program. Its place naturally comes just preceding the bringing of the gifts, particularly when the object of the offering is a foreign missionary enterprise. In this case the purpose of the offering may be to help provide funds for Miss ——, whom many of them may know, and who is a missionary in China.

Occasionally the story is used immediately preceding the climax of a worship period. In the story may be found the truth about which the whole service of worship has been woven. The story serves then to aid in bringing the wonder attitude to a climax, and to make concrete the whole service in the mind of the child, preparing him for the real climax of the service—the prayer.

In a service in which we have stressed Jesus as the children's Friend, we have sung of him and of his love for children. We have probably quoted the verse, "Let the children come to me." We may have had before the group the Plockhorst picture of Christ blessing the children. We may have reminded them of the story of Christ's blessing little children and have sung with them, "I Think When I Read That Sweet Story of Old." Our feeling has been one of thanks for the greatest gift of all, Jesus Christ. We may at this point in the program say, "We have talked this morning of Jesus and his love for children. I wish to tell you now a story of how some little children who knew Jesus and knew of his great love for them, showed him that they too loved him." "The Children's Praise Song" (Matthew 21:15, 16) may be told, preceding a climaxing prayer of gratitude for the gift of Jesus.

Our story and prayer have been the climaxing ele-

[7] Mary Kirkpatrick Berg, *Primary Story Worship Programs.*

ments, the culmination of the service. The child is left realizing that it is insufficient merely to take, but that one should also give.

Telling the Story

If the story is to mean much, it must be well told. In recalling briefly a few very commonplace helps for the story-teller we will mention first naturalness. If the one telling a story can visualize the story and think of it as a series of pictures, there will be less hesitancy. We sometimes say that with a primary-age group he who hesitates in the telling of a story is lost. At any rate, if he has to go back to pick up lost threads, he is apt to lose a number of listeners. Short sentences and much direct discourse help keep the attention. Use a natural, rather low quality of voice, avoiding at all times a sentimental tone. Clearness and distinct enunciation are essential, and changes in voice to fit the characters help make the story vivid and real. There must be no feeling of haste; rather should the story-telling be a leisurely proceeding in order to make the tale more realistic. The story should not drag and unnecessary detail and description should be avoided. Simplicity should be the watchword. Anything that savors of affectation and sophistication in manner or in wording mars the effect and destroys the story for worship purposes.

Few teachers realize how much time needs to be spent in preparing a story that is to be used in a service of worship. The best story tellers admit that they spend hours in the preparation of a new story. To successfully tell a story, the story-teller must feel it and live it before she can hope to help others to see and feel it; and this is impossible without time and study.

Dramatization in Worship

Now and then certain stories lend themselves rather richly to later presentation in dramatic form by members of the group. Dramatization of a story that is known by the children, particularly one of the Bible stories, often proves effective in stimulating better attitudes which tend to motivate conduct on the part of both listeners and participants. Occasionally one of the small class groups may work out a dramatization which the children are glad to share with the whole department. This may prove helpful to all, and through its use all may come a little nearer the Father. Dramatization that will further the spirit of worship must be simple, the mechanics of the thing not being too apparent. The arrangement of scenery, costuming, and all mechanical features must be so in readiness as not to interrupt the spirit of worship. The greatest good comes not in this final presentation, but in the preparation by the little group who work together, to prepare something for others. As they work together, planning and making simple costumes and trying to act their parts, each actor lives for the time being the life of another individual. He has in him certain feelings and desires of this other character, and these he carries out into action. At first the action is that of play, but if the child has admired the one that he, for the time being, becomes, and has himself expressed these feelings, they tend to become his own. He has for a time identified himself with the other life, and the desires of that character tend to become his own. Needless to say, any story that is unfit in and of itself as material for worship purposes should not be dramatized and used as part of any worship service.

Biblical Material

Stories used in the primary worship are sometimes Bible stories, but frequently other stories are used. When an "everyday" story contains elements that aid in the solution of the problem about which our whole service of worship is to be woven, we use that story, unless in the Bible we find a story equally suited for our purpose or better. We no longer feel that just because a story is in the Bible it is always fitted to advance the theme upon which we are at work. Neither can we successfully use all Bible stories as materials of worship, nor is all Bible material suited to six-, seven-, and eight-year-old children. When it is material bearing upon childlike situations and problems, when it is not merely instructive, but devotional in tone, when it is suited to our group and has a close relationship to the aim and subject upon which our service is based, then we gladly make use of this material. Much of the biblical material that has been used with little children, however, can make its greatest contribution later in the life of the child. When this is true we feel that it is wise to save these materials and make use of extra-biblical material. If it is not childlike in content, if its study will not aid in the solution of children's problems nor help the child better to appreciate God and his great and good gifts, we may do well to save it for future years.

Nonbiblical stories should be told instead of read to the children. With Bible stories we sometimes tell just enough to arouse the interest, and then, using a Bible, we turn to the passage and read to them the rest of the story. In this way, they learn that in the Bible are contained stories just as realistic and vivid, just as in-

teresting in every way, as the other stories they hear. This we do only occasionally, but to its occasional use may be attributed its effectiveness in large measure.

In connection with the problem of helping children to realize more of the goodness and greatness of God in sending his Son to earth, in aiding them to recognize the helpful life that Jesus, our example, lived, we may read from the Bible one of the stories about him. We have sung together, perhaps, this song, "Tell Me the Stories of Jesus." At its close we may tell them that Jesus was always trying to be kind and helpful; that he went about doing good, and that at this time we are going to read to them from the Bible about Jesus and of how he helped a certain man who sat by the road begging. The leader may open her Bible then, and read to them the story of Jesus helping a blind man (Luke 18. 35-43). The fact that this story may previously have been told in the second-year group will not detract from its use as worship material in the department group; and if it serves better to strengthen the theme or to solve their particular problem than does any other available material, an occasional repetition may prove helpful.

Keeping a Record

It is an excellent plan to keep a record of the stories used, recording just where they may be found. This is perhaps more necessary with extra-biblical material used in worship than with biblical material. State also in what connection and with what problem or theme each was used and note down something of the response of the group to the story. Did I hold my group? Did the story seem to be adapted to the group and to the service when used? Was it too long? Did I use it

at the right place in the program or could it have been used more effectively earlier or later? Was my preparation sufficient? Have we noted any specific results in activity or conduct of any members of the group as a result? These are some of the questions we may ask ourselves, recording on cards or in notebook data that may prove helpful in a second telling of the same story with some other group.

Memory Material

Memory verses, to be significant, as a means of worship, should have *rich* and varied associations built up with them, and this can best be done in connection with the class activities or enterprises. As we worship in the small group, we make greater use of the memory verses than we do in the department worship, for the reason that (unless we have strictly graded worship) there are few verses for all three grades that have sufficient associations to make them meaningful. Verses that are always well known by each grade are giving verses, such as are used in the taking of an offering, or verses that may be considered calls to worship. Material that is common to the three grades, and has sufficient association to make it valuable for the worship service, may be used. Appropriate and needed verses not well known by all may at times be given by one group or by the leader. We no longer encourage so much learning of memory verses apart from the activities and plans of the various classes of the department, but in a group in which these materials naturally arise they may make a real contribution to the worship experience of the children. There are, however, some verses which, through common department experience, have sufficient associations to be really useful, and these

we may use. If these verses are long and difficult to learn, we establish a motive for memorization, and then at a time apart from the worship period, as a department we study together the verse or verses.

A few Scripture passages which through many and varied associations have become meaningful to a host of primary boys and girls are here given:

"The Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him."

"Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise."

"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord."

"O come, let us sing unto the Lord."

"Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing."

"O give thanks unto the Lord."

"It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High."

"He hath made everything beautiful in its time."

"What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee."

"He careth for you."

"Even a child maketh himself known by his doings."

"All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them."

"Be ye kind one to another."

"We should love one another."

"The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad."

"Jesus went about doing good."

(*Giving* verses are suggested elsewhere.)

Poetry. Children as well as adults feel the thrill of poetry. Some of our most beautiful poetry we find in the Bible, and these poetic parts have their inspira-

tional service to perform. There are other gems of poetry to which the primary children respond, and from time to time we may make use of some of this poetry in our worship. The uplifting, inspiring quality of poetry is its strength. It often expresses so absolutely and so perfectly the very thing we wish we could say. Because of its extreme beauty it may become a fitting means of expression in worship. What more lovely lines have we in any literature than these, so loved by all the children and by means of which we find we may truly, joyously worship?—

> "For lo, the winter is past,
> The rain is over and gone,
> The flowers appear on the earth,
> The time of the singing of birds is come."

Extra Biblical Story Material

A suggestive list of stories that may help primary children to worship:

The Road That Wanted to Be Beautiful—*Outdoor Story Book*, Bailey; *Story Worship Programs*, Berg.

Busy Mrs. March—*From the Church School*, March, 1922; *A Year of Primary Programs*, Chapin.

The Boy Who Discovered Spring—*Why the Chimes Rang*, Alden.

How the Home Was Built—*Mother Stories*, Lindsay.

Whose Home is Best—*Course I—Christian Nurture Series; Primary Story Worship Programs*, Berg.

What Bradley Owed—*Children's Story Sermons*, Kerr; *Primary Story Worship Programs*, Berg.

Little Garden Flower—*Primary Story Worship Programs*, Berg.

God's Little Garden—*Missionary Stories for Little Folk*, Applegarth; *A Year of Primary Programs*, Chapin.

How the Artist Forgot Four Colors—*Missionary Stories for Little Folk; Children's Leader*, June, 1926.

What the Blind Princess Did—*They Love Him Too; Primary Story Worship Programs*, Berg.

Francesca's Friends—*Christian Board of Publication.*

Afraid of the Dark—They Love Him Too—*Children's Leader*, June, 1926.
How Tommy Grew Brave, Oglevee—*A Year of Primary Programs*, Chapin.
Big Brother's Ambition—*They Love Him Too; Children's Leader*, June, 1926.
Another Story About Little Trot—From *Pilgrim Elementary Teacher*, Colson.
How Fatima Heard About the Magic Spectacles—From *They Love Him Too.*
John, the Bank Errand Boy—*The Use of the Story in Religious Education*, Eggleston; *A Year of Primary Programs*, Chapin.
Piccola—*The Story Hour*, Wiggin and Smith.
Saint Valentine's Pigeon—*A Year of Primary Plans*, Chapin-Engle.
The Palace that Was Built by Music—*Why the Chimes Rang*, Alden.
Why the Chimes Rang—*Why the Chimes Rang.*

The above list represents a few of the many delightful stories that have been used to aid in developing the worship experience on the part of children. While these stories may sometimes be found in several books, at least one is here given for each story. Not in every case, perhaps, has the original source been located.

Suggestive list of books containing stories, many of which may be used in worship. The list does not presume to be an exhaustive list of the good books of stories:
Why the Chimes Rang, Alden.
For the Story Teller, Bailey.
For the Children's Hour, Bailey and Lewis.
Bible in Graded Story, Baker.
Primary Story Worship Programs, Berg.
Fanciful Flower Tales, Bigham.
Stories to Tell to Children, Bryant.
A First Primary Book in Religion, Colson.
A Second Primary Book in Religion, Colson.
Story Telling Time, Danielson.
Tell It Again Stories, Dillingham and Emerson.

Children's Stories and How to Tell Them, Essenwein and Stockard.
In Storyland, Harrison.
They Love Him Too, Hazeltine.
The Story Teller, Lindsay.
Mother Stories, Lindsay.
More Mother Stories, Lindsay.
Nature Stories, Patch.
Mayflower Program Books I and II, Perkins and Danielson.
The Golden Windows, Richards.
Tell Me a True Story, Stewart.
Stories and Story Telling, St. John.

For Discussion

1. Many superintendents think that if they can find stories to tell on Sunday morning they have planned effective worship services. Give your reasons for approving or objecting to this.

2. Do you consider the following statements true or false?—

(*a*) "Often the very interest a child has in a story is a hindrance to real worship."

(*b*) "It is only the occasional use of the story in worship with primary children that is of value."

(*c*) "Frequently the story may be used as a climax for the period of worship."

3. List ten stories suitable for telling primary children. Which of these do you consider suitable for use in the worship service? Give reasons for your answer.

4. Criticize some one story from the list you have made from the following standpoints:

(*a*) As a work of art.

(*b*) A message of beauty.

(*c*) A creator of ideals.

5. Do you agree with the following statement?—"Occasionally, because of its extreme poetic beauty a

passage of Scripture slightly beyond the comprehension of primary children may be used; for example, the twenty-third psalm."

6. Has the twenty-third psalm value as material for worship?

For Further Reading

Manual for Training in Worship, Hartshorne, Chapters IX, X, XI.

Youth and the Bible, Streibert.

Present Day Problems in Religious Education, Lee.

Training the Devotional Life, Weigle and Tweedy, Chapter V, "The Devotional Use of the Bible."

A Guide to Literature for Character Training, Starbuck and Shuttleworth.

How to Tell Stories to Children, Bryant.

Children's Stories and How to Tell Them, Essenwein and Stockhard.

The Art of the Story Teller, Shedlock.

CHAPTER VIII

PRAYER

"Lord, teach us to pray."

THE thought of prayer is so intermingled with worship that mentioning one to most minds calls up the thought of the other. Prayer is the very heart of worship. It is direct fellowship with God; it is a very definite outreach toward the Creator, and yet, as carried on in most Primary Departments, we find that the children probably worship less at the time of prayer than during any other part of the service. We seek to discover reasons why this is so, and we pause to wonder if it need be so. The seeming inability of the children to attend concerns and agitates us and often we can see no excuse for it.

LIMITATIONS OF THE CHILD

Pausing to recall some of the common characteristics of middle childhood may be helpful to us. What limitations and capacities of primary children must be considered as we plan for their prayer life? Is it possible to make their prayer life as vital and meaningful as the other avenues through which they may come to know God?

In the first place, a primary child cannot long concentrate upon any one subject, especially if there is no provision for physical activity. If the leader in her ardent zeal to pray fails to keep this in mind, the children will become restless, even though the thought expressed in the prayer may be on their own

plane and may have been their own suggestion. Again, the leader may not formulate the prayer to express the children's worship thought, and in that circumstance the children, being frankly not interested, do not respond; they do not worship; in fact, they may even become noisy and restless. We can expect nothing else. There must be a certain amount of dignity and yet the greatest simplicity in the prayer suitable for primary boys and girls. If the leader alone makes the prayer, even though it voice the sentiments of the group, even though it be short and simple, the very fact that someone else is doing the praying, makes active participation a difficult task. It is for this reason, in part, that the children in some department groups are asked to repeat aloud the words of the leader, thus making the prayer more really their own. Sometimes the leader pauses for the children to repeat, and in other groups the children pray almost simultaneously with the leader, thus making it seem a little more informal, a bit less stilted and fixed. When a primary child hears his own voice uplifted in prayer, the prayer may come to have for him greater significance, he may think it more definitely, and he is doing something; however, a number of experienced leaders feel that children lose the spirit and value of prayer when they repeat words after a leader. These leaders think that the center of interest is on trying to remember words that the leader says. This is, therefore, a problem for careful consideration.

Another well-nigh impossible task for children is to pray when they do not feel like praying. As adults we know how difficult it is to sing or play the piano, or tell a funny story, or to worship, when we do not feel in the spirit of the thing we are supposed to do. There should be what we sometimes call a mind-set. There

must be preparation which will awaken in the child a response to the situation so that he may feel a need or a distinct desire to talk to the Father about it. We often get into the habit, even in adult groups, of entering into prayer in a very perfunctory manner, praying at stated times, just because it seems the thing to do. To say, "Shall we have a word of prayer," with no preparation whatever, is a common method of approach among adults, and it is little wonder that the words of the leader often fall on deaf ears and find no echoing response. If this is true of adults, how utterly impossible for a child of six, seven, or eight years to respond when he is not conscious in any way of a felt need nor has he been inspired to thank or praise God! We cannot abruptly command adults or children to pray.

Basic Tendencies

There are certain basic tendencies in children which must be considered. There is, for example, acquisitiveness—one desires certain things for himself; there is the tendency toward self-preservation, the desire to make oneself heard and felt, and there is also the desire for approval and the dislike of disapproval. The approval of the adults, as well as of the other children who figure in a child's affairs, plays an important part in his character-building. When he has developed a rather definite concept of God, then it is that in worship he feels keenly any disapproval of the heavenly Father for some wrong act of his own. He likes to feel that God approves. Then there is in every child a great amount of curiosity. He is particularly curious about God whom he cannot see. "Has he hands and feet?" "Does he walk around?" "Does he wear clothes?" "Has he big eyes?" "Can he see me now?"

These and hundreds of other questions are asked by the smaller members of the primary group. "Does God take a nap every afternoon?" asked a small lad of his mother.

"I don't think so. He must be very busy, you know," replied his mother.

"Does Jesus take a nap, mother?" persisted the six-year old.

"I think not," said his mother.

"Well, mother, you want me to be like God and Jesus, don't you? Why then do you make me take a nap?"

There are many things the child wonders about and many questions which his parents cannot answer.

"What does God look like?" is a usual question, to which we can but reply, "I don't know."

"Where is God?" they ask.

"He is here," we may answer. "He is everywhere."

Miss Baker, in *The Worship of a Little Child,* tells this interesting story of a little girl: "Another problem that the understanding of love helps to solve is one that Mary raised when she went on a visit to Janesville; 'Why, mother, do we have to say our prayers here?' As the family did not cease to love their friends in Downers Grove and as the friends there did not cease to love them when they went to Janesville, so God, like love, goes with us everywhere, is with us everywhere. Even Mary begins to understand although she is only four years old."[1]

These basic tendencies, such as acquisitiveness, desire of approval, and curiosity, that lead to worship, must be stimulated and trained until they become wholesome. Any one of the basic tendencies could become

[1] Edna Dean Baker, *The Worship of the Little Child,* The Cokesbury Press, publishers. Used by permission.

anything but wholesome and right. Acquisitiveness, for example, can lead to a sort of worship that is nothing more nor less than magic. If a child has for his God-concept a sort of glorified Santa Claus, dispensing favors to certain favorites of his own, we can readily see the unwholesomeness of this basic tendency of acquisitiveness, but through proper stimulation and training, this even as other tendencies can become wholesome and good.

Importance of the Child's Thouht of God

The child's idea of God is one of the fundamental facts in the whole matter of prayer. Where is God? He is not up somewhere in the clouds, but down here. How does a child get the idea that God is away off somewhere? Where does he get his whole God-concept? He absorbs much consciously or unconsciously from his environment, from chance conversations of adults that he may overhear, from the songs we ask him to sing, from expressions we use in prayer, from Scripture verses he knows or hears read. We have not thought very much about the ideas he is picking up, and yet we know that we live and worship and pray in terms of how we think of God. The child who has the Santa Claus idea of God worships largely in terms of what he can get for himself. He thinks little about what he can do, he scarcely remembers even to thank God for all the things he has given him, so intent is he on getting more.

Some children have unfortunately also interpreted God as a sort of policeman who spies upon all the acts of little boys and girls. They have, therefore, developed an attitude of fear or dislike because of this idea. The child who thinks of God in this way has perhaps been told not to be naughty, for God is watching everything

he does. One such child, having often heard it said that every one would have to give an account at the Judgment "for every idle word," thought of God as a sort of ogre who was listening for such words and not only looking for but actually hoping to see wrong deeds. It is the child who interprets God in this way that usually asks the question, "Has he big eyes?"

Frequently children picture God as an old and very large man who wears flowing robes and has a white beard. It is natural for children at first to visualize him in some such manner, and this need not disturb the parent or teacher of primary folk, particularly, if we make sure that to the child he is a loving Father, one who understands and loves and wishes to help us as we endeavor to help ourselves. We must make sure that the child perceives that he himself has something to do, that he can't sit still and leave the reformation of himself to God. As Mrs. Mumford says, "God does the last little bit that we can't manage ourselves." This a child must understand.

Natural Fellowship. God to the child should be a Friend, a Companion, a Father. The child should think of him as one who is interested in us and in the things that concern us, one who likes us to tell him all about the things that make us happy, and to tell him that we are going to try to do as he wants us to do. We strive to help the child to talk to God freely, but always with great respect. Prayer is the most natural thing in the world for the child who has gained the Christian idea of God and thinks of him as one who loves and is interested and who understands. With a friendly God a child talks freely and naturally.

Josephine had had one Christmas gift which was such a gift as an eight-year-old girl had scarcely dared

to hope for. Coming as a complete surprise, the dainty, fragile, silken vest of delicate hue was regarded by its small owner as quite the loveliest thing a small girl could possibly possess. Her joy knew no bounds. As she knelt with mother for her evening prayer she thanked him for his gift to her of mother and daddy and for her friends. She asked him to help her to be kind to every one. She thanked him for the happy Christmas time and closed her prayer by saying, "And oh, heavenly Father, just to think that I have a pink silk vest! Amen."

How do we learn to know our parents and friends? It is a somewhat gradual process. It takes time and living. Knowing God is likewise not a matter of a moment nor a mere matter of information about him. Neither can this friendship, any more than earthly friendship, be forced. We learn best to know folk by sharing in their tasks with them. The time when Mary is helping mother most is the time when she knows, understands, and loves her mother best. We know and understand God best when we share in his work. We are sharing in his work when we do the everyday tasks that lie at our very doors.

"Our grand business is not to see what lies dimly at a distance, but to do what lies clearly at hand."[2]

When a child picks up his toys or his books, when he is kind to his pets, when he cares for his flowers, when he helps set the table, when he shares his toys, when he is loving and kind to his playmates, he is co-operating with God and with God's plan for him.

Prayer as Co-operation with God. When the parent or teacher begins with children where they are, with the problems they are facing day by day, she is helping

[2] Thomas Carlyle.

to relate them to God in such a way that they can give their best. This right living is, if not actual worship, at least the basis for it. As a child learns to choose the best, to help in the home, to act in a pleasant manner when he feels cross, to get along with his parents, to tell the truth, to be kind to children of all nationalities, his capacity for prayer is greatly enlarged. Is not prayer at its best and highest point co-operation as well as communion? There is more to prayer than words, for, after all, we can get into tune with God and his plan for us only as we go out and do something about it. Prayer is seeking to know God and his plan for us and, having discovered that plan, endeavoring to get into harmony with it. It is largely a matter of adjustment. At this point we can help children by training them through example and suggestion to pray not so much for an exact thing (unless for ability to speak sweetly to daddy, to help mother willingly, to share toys with brother) as for help in adapting themselves to situations as they arise. A child of primary age is not too young to learn that God cannot upset all the laws of the universe for him, and that he has no right to expect him to do so.

"Help me to have a good time to-morrow, anyhow, even if I can't go to the farm," prayed one little boy.

Training Essential

For a long time people had an idea that children did not need to be trained in anything religious, that their ability to pray, like Topsy, "just growed." We have always admitted that training in the field of music is essential for the best development. We have said that our children need to be taught to read and write and spell, but for a prayer life they apparently were already

fitted, with little or no training needed. These capacities can develop as we know how to stimulate and develop them. One's achievement is determined by his native capacity and also by training. One cannot pray without knowing how, and training should begin in childhood. We begin with the very youngest children, developing in them, first of all a relationship with God as a loving Companion, Friend, or Father, who shares with them good things, and desires their co-operation or help also. The first prayers will be short and perhaps a bit crude, but genuine if there has been developed a friendship with the Father. Such a spontaneous response came from Jimmie, who was too shy to say much but closed his eyes at the table and said, "Thank you for the stuff you give us to eat." Dorothy too had the right feeling when she just bowed her head and said, "Thank you for the crackers, thank you for the milk, and the cow and the grass." There was no address and no closing, yet each prayer was genuine and real. There was in each child love and thankfulness to the good and great Father who had been so kind to all. At first, form may hinder rather than help real communion. Jimmie and Dorothy had been taught of God and of his great love and goodness, else these beautiful spontaneous expressions would not have come. With the seven- and eight-year-old children there can be more thought centered upon giving them a vocabulary for prayer, and upon the sort of requests we make of God and how we usually do it. Some of this they absorb rather unconsciously, however, as they listen often to prayer at its best, and repeat after the teacher their own prayer as she voices it for them.

Group Activities. The class teacher should be alive to her opportunities to help children in their prayer

life. She must recognize its close connection with class activities and aid in making prayer for her group vital and meaningful. In class, as the children write or dictate to the teacher a list of things for which they are thankful, the atmosphere for prayer may develop, and to neglect this occasion for worship would be to lose a valuable moment. As the class prepares a basket to be given to a needy family a spirit of joy in being thus able to co-operate with God in making others glad and happy may possibly develop, and out of this satisfaction may grow a desire to thank God for this privilege or to ask that he show us other ways in which to help. As children learn to accept joyously responsibility for helping others, for caring for their room, or for being friendly to strangers in their group, they are learning to worship by loving service, and prayer becomes a natural outcome. It is exceedingly easy to link up prayer with the experiences of godlike living of a group, and this we cannot afford to neglect. As they plan a party for another group, the leader may suggest, "I am so happy in doing these things, I should like to talk to the Father about it. I am sure he is happy when we try to be friendly. Shall we talk to him?" And so prayer in connection with class activity becomes significant. The children may make suggestions for the prayer. Later they may learn to add to the prayer a single word or sentence. As they think together of God's gifts, or of his many helpers, each child may name in the prayer one helper, or one gift for which he wishes to thank God. As soon as a child has once lifted his voice in audible prayer, it becomes increasingly easy for him to pray in the group. Sometimes the class groups write out a prayer or several prayers and learn to form some judgment as to their value. Lead-

ing children to appreciate and judge prayers is one of the opportunities of the class teacher.

The problem of prayer grows to a large extent out of the understanding of God and an endeavor to come into harmony with him. "Not my will, but thine," said Jesus as he sought to adjust himself. One of the purposes of prayer is to learn to know God and to seek adjustment to him and his purpose for us.

Problem Situations. As we work with primary children and try to teach them to pray, our first step is to give them as nearly as possible the Christian idea of God, since so much that is fundamental depends upon a child's thought of God. We can then turn our attention to specific problem situations out of which prayer may develop. These problems must be very definite and very concrete, for a primary child gets little or nothing from abstract suggestion. The problem to be solved should be definitely suggested before the prayer, in order that the mind may be prepared to think in terms of this problem which may be the specific occasion for worship. "Why must I often let someone else do the thing I want to do?" This is one of the many problems facing a primary child and one about which he can well afford to think and concern himself. It is a problem in his everyday work and play life and can become an occasion or reason for communing with God. He might hear, first of all, a story. It may be about a boy or girl who has willingly given to another child the chance to take the leading part in a little play to be given. Most children of six, seven, and eight years have felt the pangs of disappointment and envy, perhaps, as they have seen a delightful part in a dramatization passed on to some other child. How can a primary child control himself and his unhappy feelings in such

a situation? Is it possible to be sweet about things when so terribly disappointed? Is the child who grumbles and acts grouchy about it apt to be given the best part next time? Aren't the children who do the least shouting and complaining and teasing better helpers than the ones who plainly show their feelings? How do you suppose Jesus acted when he had to give up things he wanted? How does the Father want us all to act in such situations? These or similar questions could be brought up and talked over and will lead the children to a consciousness of a need that may be their very own. Speaking to the Father about it, and telling him we know what we ought to do, and that we want his help in doing the kind, the right thing, when we have to give up our desires, is the natural result. "Perhaps he can help us sometimes to offer another child a chance to do the things we should like so much to do," we might suggest.

Children willingly and gladly attend and pray when they feel that they know what it is all about, and when they perceive the purpose and need for prayer. Suggestions as to what particular things we wish to say to God will stimulate a better response and the alert teacher will eagerly use every opportunity for real prayer that offers itself.

The prayer must be concrete and it must also express the children's worship thought; it must be something that will function in their lives; and it should be of value both in and outside the school. This is one step—just telling him all about it. Another step, the greater one possibly, is to go out and do something about it.

Prayers of Appreciation. Not all of a child's life centers about problem-solving. A very great deal of his interest pertains to the wonder element, to the great-

ness and goodness of the Creator. We aim to develop his appreciation for God's great love and care. An obvious result is praise and thanksgiving and natural conversation with the Father about these things. We provide opportunity for the child to discover God's love and goodness, with observation, when possible, of the experiences of others who have found happiness in companionship with him, and then with freedom granted the child he will gladly express in his own way his feelings. We cannot force this friendship, else what might be eager, spontaneous, joyous prayer becomes forced, formal, and merely dutiful. The judicious teacher, one with tact and respect for the personality of children, finds occasions when she talks with her little group about prayer, about the times when we talk to God and what we say. The first prayers usually suggested are prayers of appreciation for his loving care and for his great and good gifts.

The subject with the little group was God's gift of water. A vivid presentation had been given this first-year class through a story. At the close the teacher's question was, "Were you ever very thirsty? How happy you were when you were able finally to get a drink, weren't you? Who gave you the glass of water to quench your thirst, Molly? Your mother was very happy to be able to do it for you too, I imagine. Did you say thank you to her? Yes, indeed, I know you did. I wonder if you stopped to think that it was God's love and care that made it possible for her to give you water to drink. I wonder if you said thanks to God for his gift of water. How many of you would like to thank him right now for that good gift to us? Who would like to say, 'Thank you' to him?" As the children bowed their heads, Adelaide said, "Thank you, Father,

for giving us all water to drink. Amen." Molly also prayed, "Dear heavenly Father, we thank you for all your gifts. We thank you for your gift of water. Amen." And thus early these children are learning to pray in class groups.

The Complete Act

Prayer grows to a great extent out of group experience. In vacation school the children had been making their own standards of conduct. They had been very explicit and definite in naming and discussing desirable activities for boys and girls. This was evidenced in seven-year-old Harriett's prayer one evening. As she and mother knelt beside her bed, her prayer, reverent and meaningful, was as follows: "Dear heavenly Father, we thank thee for this happy day. We thank thee for the birds and bees and butterflies and for sunshine and flowers. We ask thee to bless us and to bless our vacation school. And, O Father, help us to remember not to snatch things from each other, but to say, 'Please, Lillian, may I use your crayons?' Help us not to scrap and help me not to snatch things back even if they are taken from me. For Jesus sake, Amen."

These children had made their standards as they talked over such problems as what makes a pleasant work period, when is a thing mine, and when isn't it mine? The making of standards was the first step. Harriett then remembered to talk to God about it, and to ask his help in carrying out the right activities. The big and final step was to express in her daily endeavors the desire verbally expressed to the Father. "His daily prayers must be expressed in his daily endeavors."[3]

[3] Edith E. Read Mumford, *The Dawn of Character in the Child*. Longmans, Green & Co., publishers. Used by permission.

The complete act consists of purposing, planning, executing, and judging. Prayer is not really complete unless it goes out into activity. Just communing is much, but it is not all. In no way can a child get a more religious experience than in the completion of this first part of the act of prayer, through service, through going out and doing something about it. There is a type of worship one experiences when he feels he must praise God, an ecstatic thrill, making the individual extremely joyful and happy in his desire to thank and praise God in a prayer of appreciation; there is the meditative type when one quietly thinks of God and his plan for us and how we may do our part; but the most complete worship is a life rightly lived—lived in harmony with God and his will for us.

The child is truly happiest when he has prayed and has put into practice the thing he prayed about. He goes back to God again in prayer and thanksgiving, and with great content he realizes the act of prayer to be complete. Martha had prayed that God would help her to be a very good girl, the kind of girl who is willing to help. (Martha disliked very much helping with the dishes.) During the following day, she was unusually helpful and as a consequence received much praise from both mother and father. As she prayed at bedtime she said, "O heavenly Father, I'm so glad I was more helpful to-day. I've had such a happy day! And, O God, I am so glad I tried harder to-day. Please help me again to-morrow. For Jesus sake, Amen."

Selfish and Unselfish Praying

One of the somewhat disheartening things with primary-age groups is the tendency toward selfishness in their prayers. Said a small boy of seven: "I'm mad at

God. I prayed for a two-wheeled bicycle and I didn't get it." There are dangers on every hand besetting the leaders of children. The difficulty in this case had been partially in regard to his idea of God, and in part due to his training or lack of training. There will be no such problem with children who, through example, and also through direct suggestion, have sensed the type of thing for which one petitions God.

Contrast with this lad another child. Helen was sick in bed with the chickenpox and spent her day watching the other children play, longing to be out with them. When she talked to the Father at night she voiced her prayer in this way: "God bless all the children I know, and all the folks I don't know. And O, dear heavenly Father, I am so glad that the other children can be out playing anyhow, even if I can't. And please bless all the blind people. Amen."

If we can stimulate an interest in others to a marked degree, we find here assistance in getting their minds off themselves, and they will then pray less for material things for self and more for other people. The primary child has passed beyond the beginner stage, and although not capable of thoughts and feelings such as the junior possesses, he is nevertheless more nearly on his plane than on the plane of the little child—first-grade children being excepted. He prides himself upon being no longer a baby, and we can use this fact in his training. His prayer life begins to approach that of the older group. In other words, we can expect much more of second- and third-grade children than we have sometimes believed. They can understand much in regard to the impossibility of God's changing his laws to suit their convenience. However, in many ways we are amazed at the primary child and his limitations, and

so he becomes very really a distinct problem, like neither the little child, nor yet like the junior. We therefore endeavor to discover how best to serve and train the children of this age group. In some ways and on some days they seem so grown up, and again they are just babies.

A Feeling of Need

They are old enough now to talk occasionally about prayer and its values in their lives and so come to a better understanding of prayer. In groups they can state a few of their own problems about which they would like to talk to God as they grapple with a human need, just as real to them as an adult's problems are to him. What shall I do when I accidentally break something belonging to someone else? Shall I eat my share of the ice cream when unexpected guests arrive? Is it necessary for me to tell mother when I get my feet wet and she might not find out? Is it fair for mother to punish me when I disobey? These and many other problems growing out of the everyday life experiences of children are vital in their lives, and the ways they solve them are means of character development. Are not these problems subjects for prayer, or shall we continue to pray about things not particularly connected with their lives now? To guide children in a prayer life that will help them to live more richly and successfully and happily right now should be the aspiration of every primary worker.

There may prove to be more opportunities in the Sunday-school session for genuine prayer than we have planned for. Shall we feel that our session has been successful if we have failed to use these unforeseen opportunities? Whenever in any part of the program we

feel keenly conscious of God's great love and goodness or of our need of him, we may speak to him in prayer.

Saying Prayers and Praying

There is a vast difference between saying prayers and praying. There are some values in the use of form prayers, but also many difficulties. Form prayers are easily learned and if they express children's worship thought and deal with matters with which children are vitally concerned, they may become a preparation for spontaneous prayer. A child may actually pray the form prayer; it may be full of significance and meaning for him and become extremely helpful. It is a much easier matter to have children who have not known a prayer experience until eight years, for example, begin their prayer life with a form prayer, than to ask or expect them to offer original prayers. Forms, even when good, however, tend to become a mechanical repetition of words. A change to another learned prayer will aid at this point. Form prayers have an added value of being easily used by the group in unison and can, properly directed, enlist the active co-operation of the entire group.

It seems almost unnecessary to note that we no longer teach the old version of "Now I lay me down to sleep," since it has a wrong emphasis and is very misleading. Children are much more concerned with living than with dying and often feel frightened after saying this prayer. It has been changed however, and in this form becomes a lovely thought for a child:

> "Now I lay me down to sleep,
> I pray thee, Lord, thy child to keep,
> Thy love go with me all the night
> And wake me with the morning light."

Robert Louis Stevenson's lines,

> "Thanks to our Father we will bring,
> For he gives us everything,"

are quite appropriate and childlike, as are also these lines from Emerson:

> "For flowers that bloom about our feet,
> For tender grass so fresh and sweet,
> For song of bird and hum of bee,
> For all things fair we hear and see,
> We thank thee."

This last poem we may use in the spring in connection with the thought, "He hath made everything beautiful in its time—" and the song, "All Things Bright and Beautiful."

There are many song prayers that are very lovely and which at times make a real contribution. Two illustrations are here given:

> "For my home and friends I thank thee,
> For my father, mother dear,
> For the hills, the trees, the flowers,
> And the sky so bright and clear."[4]

These song prayers when thoughtfully used have a place in the prayer life of children and may be used to supplement spontaneous prayer and the prayer that is voiced by the leader. The leader's prayer may express more thoughts directly touching the life experience of the group, and yet forms, correctly used, are at times an excellent addition. The form prayer is easier to say, but harder to pray.

The Lord's Prayer is used in some departments every Sunday. Few, if any, of the children know what the

[4] Danielson and Conant, *Songs for Little People*. Copyright, The Pilgrim Press, publishers. Used by permission.

words mean, and even though words were understood, this prayer cannot be considered an expression of a primary child's thought and feeling—it is not within his realm of life experience. It was given by Jesus not as a model for children but for adults. Its introduction too early in their lives may detract from a later understanding and appreciation of it, and its constant use tends to foster lack of thinking in praying. It is less likely to become mechanical if not introduced until children can grasp much of its real significance, meaning, and beauty. Its occasional use is a question for careful consideration, however, since most of the children have learned it at home or in public school before the age of six or seven years.

Preparation for Prayer

Preparation for prayer is most necessary. After hearing a well-told story which brings to light the problem about which the worship is woven, is a fitting time for prayer. Perhaps a song and informal conversation may follow. This sometimes gives a place for another brief, simple word with God before the closing song which may end the worship service. A story in the small class group with appropriate pictures may be adequate preparation for prayer led by the teacher, or for spontaneous prayers from different members of a class. The offering is another preparation for prayer and frequently a prayer song will voice most fittingly the joy the children find in giving.

There is variety of opinion as to how much responsibility for individual praying may be given the children themselves. Should we expect spontaneous prayer in a department service? This depends upon a number of factors. Children should never be forced to pray and

thus placed in embarrassing situations. Sometimes there may be individuals who can, without undue pressure, unassumingly lead in extemporaneous prayer, and again individuals may be shy and extremely sensitive, or they may be overeager to pray in the department group. Individual prayers in a small group are easier and do not foster tendencies toward insincerity or attempts to "show off." Praying must be more than glibly saying words. A child of a certain temperament and type may become very voluble as to words, and yet lack the earnest and sincere desire to do or be or have the thing he is fluently and effusively speaking about. This kind of praying leads to insincerity. He has lost sight of the real objective and motive of prayer in his immediate desire for adult approval. There must be in him the real desire and longing. "Prayer is the soul's sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed."[6]

In speaking on the subject of children leading in prayer, Hazel Lewis says: "Undoubtedly there have been situations when the audible informal prayers of children have been genuine, and to have suppressed them would have been tragic. But just as disastrous results have come from urging children to take part in this way and commending them for it, as though it were a performance of skill rather than a spiritual act."[7]

And thus there are many difficulties besetting the leader, and while we hope ultimately for sincere, extemporaneous, spontaneous prayer from some of the children, there will be only a small proportion who will respond in the large group. More may be expected under skillful guidance with the class groups.

[6] James Montgomery.
[7] *Children's Leader*. American Baptist Publication Society, publishers. Used by permission.

Closing Prayer

Must we always have a closing prayer? This is a question frequently asked. There are really and can be no "musts" about worship and particularly about prayer. If it seems fitting and right that there be a prayer at the close of the session, a skilled leader will not fail to seize this as an occasion for thus helping to develop a prayer experience. Sometimes closing with prayer is as futile as it is out of place. It would be but training in a sort of irreverence and mockery—it would be perfunctory, meaningless and insincere to thrust prayer upon deaf ears and unreceptive minds. Often a closing prayer song by the group is used. The second verse of "Morning Hymn"[8] is a most appropriate closing thought—something to take with them for all the week—and this can often be used when spoken prayer by a leader would be unsuitable. In some schools the classes reassemble before leaving and use this song or some other prayer song all together. Again many groups are dismissed by the class teacher and in that case each teacher may plan her own dismissal.

The "Carry-Overs" of Prayer

A phase of prayer life often overlooked by church-school teachers is the follow-up work in the homes and the "carry-overs" of prayer. Children should be impressed with the fact that prayer is not just for Sunday. The leader of the large group, and frequently class teachers also, will speak to them of the desirability of talking to God at any time—not just at bed time only. We aim to help the child form the prayer habit and also to experience the joy and happiness that come

[8] *Songs for Little People.*

through prayer, above all remembering that the ultimate test lies in the later conduct of the one who prays.

"He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small,
For the dear God who loveth us
He made and loveth all."[9]

For Discussion

1. Why should training in prayer life be begun early?

2. Have you ever heard a mother at bedtime say to her child, "Come, hurry now and say your prayers"? Criticize her method.

3. Why is it well never to force a child to pray?

4. What do you consider the ultimate test of prayer?

5. What is meant by "the complete act"? Consider prayer under the heads (1) purposing, (2) planning, (3) executing, (4) judging.

6. What is your opinion as to the values and opportunities for individual prayer from members of the primary group (1) in class, (2) in department?

7. What do you think of the plan followed by a few class teachers of talking over with the little group such problems as when we may speak to God, the sort of things we speak to him about, the manner in which one usually addresses God, etc.?

8. Collect a number of prayers of primary children. Note the proportion that evidence careless training in regard to the God-concept.

9. Criticize the regular use of the Lord's prayer in the department worship service.

10. Do you agree with the statement that children lose the spirit and value of prayer when they repeat the

[9] Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

words after the leader? Does the interest center on trying to remember what words the leader says?

For Further Reading

The Religious Consciousness, Pratt, Chapter XV.
Training the Devotional Life, Weigle and Tweedy, Chapters II and III.
A Study of the Primary Child, Whitley, Chapter X.
Concerning Prayer, Streeter.
The Meaning of Prayer, Fosdick, Chapter I.
How We Can Help Children to Pray, Mumford.
The Dawn of Religion in the Mind of the Child, Mumford.
Children's Devotions, Verkuyl.

CHAPTER IX

GIVING AS AN ACT OF WORSHIP

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

SOMEWHAT impatiently, but with beaming eyes and dancing heart, Ruth awaited her father. Tightly clasped in her arms was a large cluster of dainty pink roses and lilies of the valley that she had gathered from the garden, and had painstakingly arranged. "Here he comes! Here he comes!" she cried as daddy appeared coming around the corner, ready now to take her to church school. Ruth's class had planned to bring things this Sunday to help make the department room more beautiful. Their teacher had been exceedingly happy to help her group in carrying out their plans. She had talked to them of the joy of sharing what we have with others, and had explained that whatever they brought to help in beautifying their room would be a real gift, an offering just as truly as was the money they brought each Sunday.

Ruth was having a new and happy experience—a feeling such as many adults are incapable of having in regard to the offering they take to church. Her bouquet of flowers was to be presented as an offering, and no nickel or dime or quarter that she had ever previously taken to the church school had made the child so happy or so conscious of a desire to dedicate a gift to His service.

STIMULATING AN INTEREST IN GIVING

Because a child thinks best in terms of the concrete

and of things near at hand, because it is most natural to try to make those in one's own group happy, a child's first gifts are more genuine, more spontaneous, and more real when they are definite tangible things, given to bring those he knows and loves a bit of cheer and pleasure.

Possibly we have been going about this problem of the offering in a wrong way. Certain it is that we have not altogether succeeded in nurturing in our children any very great and consuming passion to give to others. Had we but had the insight of Ruth's teacher, Miss Wright, we might have been more successful. Miss Wright had spoken to her little group of God's gifts to us. On the Sunday preceding the day Ruth offered her flowers the children had sung, "Each Little Flower That Opens." Miss Wright had talked with her group about many of God's good and lovely gifts; and she had suggested that it is not enough for us merely to sit back and enjoy all these beautiful things, but that we have an opportunity each day we live to show him our appreciation for them. "How may we show God that we do appreciate his goodness and his gifts?" she asked. No one could answer for a long time, when finally Lois said we could share them with someone else. "Yes," said Miss Wright, "if we have lovely flowers, or a canary bird, or a big back yard, we can often make someone else happy by sharing with him these things of our own."

Then she spoke of the room to which they came each Sunday to worship God with the other boys and girls. "Perhaps," she said, "it would make all happier, and God happy too, if we were to try to make this room more beautiful. Have any of you anything of your own that you would like to share with us all right here

—something that would make this room more cheerful and lovely, something that might make us realize more fully that God is right here with us?"

Suggestions came from many as to how that little class could make every one in the school happier by sharing with them a few of their own things. On the following Sunday there was an offering service of a rather different nature from the ones we usually see. It was very informal and very real. When the leader of worship said, "We have worshiped God through our songs, and through our prayer, and now we will worship him with our gifts," there was a simple dedication of the gifts Miss Wright's children had brought for the beautifying of the room, as well as of their money gifts. There were several potted plants, Ruth's roses, a picture and an attractive flower basket. Because of their feeling of being copartners with God in making these special gifts, the worship service was more genuine than was usually the case.

In another school, a little offering service arose somewhat spontaneously as the fruit of suggestions given on the previous Sunday. The leader had suggested that it would be splendid to show their appreciation of the story one of the teachers had so beautifully told the children, by offering her, as a small token of their appreciation, a basket of violets that the children had gathered and placed on the superintendent's table. A week later Mildred raised her hand at the close of the worship. She said: "May we give our flowers to-day to Mrs. Evans? She is always here to play the piano for us." They all sang together then, "Be Ye Kind One to Another," and a prayer of thankfulness was offered, voiced by the leader, for one who was always willing to give her time and talent for the boys and

girls. Mrs. Evans, each Sunday morning, was making a very real offering, and the children had recognized this fact and were showing their appreciation of her by offering her what they had.

The matter of helping primary boys and girls to want to give is a major problem. We find as we consider the matter of right motivation that we have been giving altogether too little thought to this, the most important phase of giving. We have been overemphasizing results and sums to the neglect of helpfulness and unselfish service. While our ultimate aim is to develop in the child a permanent desire to give, for the welfare of others, our immediate problem is to discover and use certain definite experiences through which we may guide him in such a way as to awaken within him a desire to continue giving and doing for others. A permanent or lasting motive grows out of satisfactory and pleasurable experience.

Development of Motives. After determining in our own minds the motives for which we are striving, we next endeavor to discover how best they can be developed in the primary child. Possibly the logical first step with the children may be to make the immediate friends about us glad and happy. At any rate here we have the visible results expressed. To do for those we know and love round about us and to see them made happy and glad will make a child more aware of the joy he may give the heavenly Father whom he cannot see. Our initial step, then, in developing proper motivation might be in learning to live together, doing things for those about us, helping the ones in our own big group and in our smaller groups, and in our homes. We may stress the fact that we are pleasing God by being happy ourselves, by helping others to be happy, and by doing

little acts of kindness and of service for each other. Gradually we reach out further. We become interested in a child we do not know but who would become our friend, and with whom we should like to share some of our good gifts. This little friend may live here in our country, or through a missionary friend we may gain for our group a friend in China, or perhaps South America, or in some other country. The third-grade children might write letters to her and her answer could be read to all. It will be delightful to find through her letter that she has been able to use and enjoy gifts purchased with the money we brought for that purpose. And all the time we are realizing that in making her happy we are co-operating with God and sharing in his purpose for us. We show him our love by sharing in his work.

Expression in Worship. When we awaken a desire on the part of children to do something for someone who may be in need of things they can give, there are at least three things we must remember: (1) Having aroused in them a desire to help, we must provide a way for them to express themselves in service for this particular cause. (2) We should not make a great point of our generosity but emphasize instead our opportunity to share with someone else some of our good gifts. In turn the one to whom we give may have gifts of another kind to share with us. It is interesting and satisfying, at any rate, to receive word that our gifts were received and used. (3) Whether our offering was an act of service, special articles, or gifts of money, we are to make the offering an act of real worship, bringing into the act its relationship to God, a consciousness that we are helpers or co-operators with God in his work, and have presented to him that which may assist

him in extending his love and goodness into the world. This should be our objective. The giving of that which can be used to promote the Kingdom should surely be made an act of worship.

The Meaning of Offering. "Offering" is a word full of meaning and significance. Few of us, however, really pause to consider just the meaning of the term when we plan an offering service. In a few schools, even to-day, primary superintendents are still "taking up a collection." It is an advance step when schools abandon certain nonfitting terms and along with the terms, ideas that have long been associated with them. It seems self-evident that an erroneous connotation will develop, consciously or unconsciously, from continuous association with this term "collection," void of religious significance. As synonymous of the word "collection" we find the words "mass," "heap," "aggregate," while synonymous with offering we have "a sacrifice," "a gift." So long as we continue to plan and think in terms of collections, our offerings tend to become just that. Again, we must advance yet a step further than we have done in many schools as we recognize the fact that "offering" is a broader term than the offering of money. True, money may become a real gift, and yet there are still other sacrifices, yet other gifts of equally great value. We will consider an offering to include more than the bringing to church school of money for various purposes. This brings us to the subject of motivation of conduct and of service. A real gift in the primary group may be an act of service just as surely as it may be a gift of money. Indeed, we discover many times a child's gift of money is not a gift—not a real offering—and the value and purpose of the offering service are lost so far as that child is concerned. We must

keep continually in the foreground of our thinking that the real value of any offering is not in the amount which may be obtained from the group but that it is the effect produced upon the individual child who is giving. Never should the test of giving in the primary department be, "How much was given to-day?" but, "Did the children give in the right spirit—was there a real desire to give?"

Knowing and Understanding the Cause. The desire to help is more certain to develop when he understands exactly the cause for which he is expected to give—when he knows where his gift is to go. To tell the child that his money goes to the church or to help the Chinese, or to say he should bring it because God wishes him to do so, or any other general and indefinite statement, will invariably fail to bring a whole-hearted response. A child of primary age should feel that he has a share in the responsibility of maintaining the church of which his school is a part; he becomes more interested in a church that he helps; but to state that he should bring money to help support the church is to him meaningless and abstract, and he fails to find great joy in his gift. If the Primary Department could plan to take one special responsibility, such as buying some song books, or paying for some of the coal that helps keep the church warm for our parents and friends who come there, or to buy flowers to help make it lovely—some specific thing—then they would understand why money is needed, and rejoice to have some share in the responsibility for their church.

When children understand the purpose of their gifts, when they are eager to give to some particular cause, when they have taken their money from their own allowance, or have earned it by doing extra tasks, when

they know just where it is to go, joy and satisfaction in giving will replace any former indifference. Satisfaction in giving usually guards against any possible inclination to stop at the drug store and use the money for candy or gum. The use of the single or duplex envelope also protects the child to some extent from the temptation to use the money for himself. The use of these envelopes also adds to the significance of giving and encourages regular, systematic, and proportionate giving.

It is well never to let children forget the particular purpose of their offerings. If it is only mentioned occasionally they will forget and lose interest. A very few words each Sunday or every two weeks as to its purpose serve to keep before them the cause to which they are giving.

Since children are interested primarily in other children, a gift for children usually makes the greatest appeal. The offering of the birthday money, as an expression of their appreciation of God's love and care, can very fittingly be used to buy milk for babies in a day nursery, to get food or clothing for children in an orphanage, or to help in a mission kindergarten of which they know. To the birthday sum may be added other money and any gifts which they wish to contribute. To show pictures of the Browntown Children's Home, to plan what health giving foods to send, to write and receive letters, or, if possible, to visit groups with whom they are sharing some of their gifts, will stimulate interest and there will grow within the group a real desire to help God in his great work of caring for boys and girls.

Special Offerings. Special offerings seem to make a stronger appeal than does the regular offering of money

each Sunday. At Christmas time the front of the primary room is often filled with dolls, sleds, skates, cars, games, and toys of every description. This is one of the special offerings in which children delight. They love to see the things they are giving, and it is a perfectly natural, normal feeling for a child to delight more in these attractive special gifts that he is sharing with other children than in gifts of money. For this reason it is often possible to make of a special offering service a more genuine, understandable, heartfelt offering than is possible with any other kind. With this age child it is well to make much of these special offerings, since this aids in bringing about a greater desire to make future sacrifices. The dedication of special offerings is a step toward less tangible and more abstract giving. These special offerings bring to the child genuine satisfaction, especially if the gift has been somewhat of a sacrifice.

Mary Ellen had dressed one of her dolls, with which she no longer played, in a lovely new red silk dress with a cap and coat to match. When she was ready to take "Mary Jane" to the church to give to some other little girl, there were tears of regret upon Mary Ellen's cheeks. "I just don't see," she said, "how I can give Mary Jane away now, with the pretty new clothes!" Her mother reminded her that she had five other dolls, and that some little girl would be made very happy because of this gift. Finally Mary Ellen started for the church where a group of children from the Holliday Home had come to join with Mary Ellen's department in a Christmas party. Mary Ellen enjoyed listening to the songs the visitors sang, but kept a vigilant watch of her precious dolly. She almost felt she must go and take Mary Jane from under the Christmas tree. When

the gifts were given the visitors, Mary Ellen stood on tiptoe to see who would get Mary Jane. The doll was handed to a little girl just Mary Ellen's size. The child seized the dolly with rapture and tears of joy shone in her eyes as she hugged the doll to her breast. Mary Ellen whispered to her mother, who sat beside her: "Oh, I am so happy. She will make a kind mother for Mary Jane, I'm sure." Mary Ellen's offering had become real, a gift, a sacrifice. She had not given just something she didn't care about herself—and in the end she had been glad to give. A greater desire to give would undoubtedly motivate her next offering.

When an offering has cost a child nothing there is greater chance that he will gain no particular satisfaction in the giving and that he may become indifferent and careless in regard to it. An article that has been loved by a child may cost him an effort in the giving and it is frequently by this method that the child learns something of the joy and satisfaction of giving. From giving tangible things will grow, if carefully cultivated, an interest and desire strong enough to become a real urge toward regular giving. For the regular Sunday offering the child will be taught to bring his gifts of money. In this parents can greatly help by so arranging affairs in the home that the child has some money of his own. He may be given an allowance each week and from this sum he can give regularly to a cause which has been explained and made real to him by his teacher or by the superintendent of the department. At a parent-teacher meeting or by letter the parents may be asked to co-operate in this matter, and most of them will gladly do so when they understand exactly what the school is trying to achieve through the offering service.

The Friends With Whom They Share. We wish to avoid allowing our primary folk to develop a superior attitude toward those to whom they give. A feeling of condescending superiority is above all to be guarded against. To this end we may strive to impress upon the children their own dependence upon God and upon all the people who are his co-workers. They themselves are greatly indebted to many people for their comforts and happiness, and they in turn may be privileged to become helpers in God's great work. The children whom they help may be regarded as little friends, and are never spoken of as "poor children." With these friends they may delight to share some of the things they have. The children who need some things may be very rich in other ways. They are no different from the children who are giving to them, as these, our primary children, must be taught to realize.

"Mother, just think, Virginia Tucker hasn't any hat at all. She comes to school without any hat and she wore a thin little sweater, and oh, it was so cold to-day, mother, wasn't it? May I give her that blue tam of mine? I never wear it and I have two other hats," said Alice, greatly excited and distressed over Virginia's needs. "My, she must be awfully poor! She told me her mother said she simply couldn't get her any hat now."

After school, Alice made the trip over to Virginia's house. She had taken her blue tam and an outgrown coat, for Alice was much taller than Virginia. As she left she said, "Mother, she is certainly very poor. I like to help poor folks, don't you?"

Mother replied, "She does need some things, but I shouldn't call her a poor girl, if I were you."

In a half hour Alice returned. "Oh, mother," she

said, "may I go and play at Virginia's house to-morrow? She has a darling little baby brother, and he is the dearest thing! He can say 'bye-bye' and wave, and he smiled at me all the time, and Mrs. Tucker says I may wheel him sometime in his carriage. Oh, mother, may I, please, go to-morrow and play? It isn't far, you know."

"Yes, dear," said mother, "you may go. Perhaps you can help Virginia take care of him sometimes. Virginia is a very rich little girl, isn't she, Alice?"

"Yes, mother," said Alice, "she certainly is."

A group of primary children became interested in Elizabeth Ann, who lived far away. Through a missionary from their church they learned of her. They discovered her age and size and sent her some dresses, shoes, stockings, and a lovely hat. Elizabeth Ann, in turn, had some things this Sunday-school class of girls knew little about. She exchanged gifts with them, sending specimens of wild flowers she had found and had pressed, many of which were entirely new varieties to this group of children. A box of arbutus was then sent to her by a member of this class, and later Elizabeth Ann sent a box of pretty stones and shells she had picked along the coast near her home. The exchange of gifts was a good thing for Elizabeth Ann and also for the class of girls. There was no feeling in this group of condescension and superiority. Letters between Elizabeth Ann and the group were read with eagerness and delight and a feeling of genuine friendship sprang up between these children who had experienced the joys of sharing.

Opportunities for Expression Needful

Giving broadens interests and sympathies. When a desire and a willingness to help in a certain cause have

been created, means should be provided whereby the children may express themselves in service or through material gifts. When a tendency to act has been aroused and stimulated, there is a feeling of restlessness and dissatisfaction if no provision for expression is made. Repeated mentioning of conditions which need remedying with no accompanying plans for action has a harmful effect upon the child. He finally ceases to be impressed. He becomes indifferent to the needs of the world; whereas to tell him only of needs which he has some opportunity to remedy or improve will doubtless lead to continued desire and determination to help in other causes. Satisfaction and pleasure in having been able to help, strengthen the child's willingness to do so at future times.

It is unwise with primary children to lay great stress upon suffering, extreme poverty, and great physical need. It is ordinarily outside of the realm of their understanding and comprehension; moreover, they can learn to desire to share with others their gifts and blessings without being told too much of extreme cases of dire need and want. These things sometimes prey upon their minds, disturbing their sleep, and do not offer greater opportunity for training in giving as an act of worship than would a less morbid presentation of a need.

An Act of Worship

Our aim with the children is, first of all, to arouse in them a desire to help—to give. Through explaining definite, appropriate, concrete, interesting causes to which they can give, through stories of others who have gladly given "Another Story of Little Trot,"[1] "What

[1] Elizabeth Colson. The Pilgrim Press. Also found in *Primary Story Worship Programs*, Mary Kirkpatrick Berg.

the Blind Princess Did,"[2] etc.) through hearing of the joy of the recipient of their gifts, this aim may, to a great extent, be accomplished. But to have the greatest significance for the child, the act of giving must be closely connected with God and his great plan and purpose for us. The giving should be an act of worship. We worship him through prayer, our songs, our stories—let us worship him with our gifts; and thus we help them to find the highest joy of giving.

To accomplish this second part of our aim—the close association of our gift with God and his desire for us—we provide for the group of children an "offering service" in which the act of giving is raised or exalted—in which we become co-partners with God and share with him in the work of life. The offering service helps to make the religious motive the inspiration for giving. To be one of a group, all of whom are worshiping him by the dedication of gifts adds significance to the act of giving. The offering as a service prolongs the act of giving; it gives opportunity for comment. The purpose of the offering is mentioned, else many will forget and lose interest. When there is occasion for the use of appropriate prayer songs and verses of Scripture pertaining to giving, giving becomes more real and more genuinely an act of worship.

Conducting an Offering Service

How may we conduct an offering service? There are a number of plans used. The practical matter of just in what particular manner to receive the offering may be worked out with reference to local conditions. The service should be simple but impressive. When an offering is presented with beauty and with dignity it

[2] Missionary Movement, "They Love Him Too."

becomes far more significant, its possibilities far more urgent. When money is hastily collected by a class secretary or by the class teacher, stuck in an envelope and taken up by the department secretary as a matter of business to be done up in the most expeditious manner possible, then it becomes more or less a mere collection.

In a certain church school in which the children were seated together in a group, the following plan was successfully used: The superintendent had on the table two boxes which she had neatly and attractively covered with crepe paper and a few Dennison seals appropriate to the month (being changed each month). After the leader had reminded the children of the particular cause for which they had brought their gifts, two children (previously arranged for) came forward. As they stood before the table, before taking the offering boxes, all of the children were asked to say together the Bible verse that tells us what sort of a giver God loves. Together they repeated, "God loveth a cheerful giver." "Freely ye have received, freely give," quoted the superintendent. "Let us show our love and thanks at this time by bringing our gifts for others," she suggested. At the sound of soft strains from the piano ("Serenade," by Schubert[3]—simple, short arrangement) the children, who had been quietly standing in front of the table, took the offering boxes and passed to every child (one to the right of the group and one to the left), who placed his offering in the box. The "ushers" returned to the table with the gifts of money and after a very brief prayer by the leader, all joined together in the offering song, "Gifts of Love."[4] Had this been a

[3] See Service No. 9 in *Services and Songs*, by Josephine L. Baldwin.
[4] Edith Lovell Thomas, *A First Book in Hymns and Worship*.

larger group, four children might have come to receive offering plates, possibly similar to the regular church offertory plates. The four children might then have followed more nearly the plan used in the regular church service. To model the offering after that of the church has its advantages, as can readily be seen.

In another department, in which the children sat in class groups about their tables, facing their chairs to the front during worship, there were small offertory plates placed in the center of each table. Into these, the envelopes containing their money gifts were placed upon their arrival at Sunday school. When time came for the presentation of the offering, a word was spoken by the leader as to the purpose of their gifts. A few offering verses were given and an offering song was sung by all. At the close of the song the pianist played softly the music of the song, "We Give Thee But Thine Own,"[5] as a representative from each class came forward with the gifts. A brief prayer by the superintendent asking God's blessing upon their gifts afforded a suitable close. (If their money is left in an offering plate as they enter, they must know that it is this money that they dedicate in their offering service.)

Sometimes primary children are asked to march around and drop the money into a basket held by one of the children. Of course this does provide activity and might possibly be used to advantage occasionally—upon a rainy day, for example. The most serious objection to this plan is that the dropping of the money, the marching around, and the opportunity to push the child in front, that now and then proves too enticing a pastime for the third-grade husky to resist, become of prime interest, rather than the thought of giving and

[5] *Songs for Little People.*

thus helping God in his work. Besides, to a primary boy or girl, it sometimes seems too much like a kindergarten activity—a thing a bit beneath the dignity of one perhaps very recently graduated to the Primary Department.

But recently the writer visited a Primary Department in a large and wealthy church. This plan of marching to give the offering was being used. The leader told the children that the offering was to be taken. No word was mentioned of the purpose for which their gifts had been brought, no reminder of God's desire that we "give as we are able" or that "He loves a cheerful giver," no song to put them into a frame of mind for giving. There were very specific directions to remind them of just how they were to march, James leading and going in this direction and then around in such and such manner as Miss West played for the march. They succeeded admirably in getting around without any confusion, but the mechanics of the process had gained such prominence that it is doubtful if one single child came any nearer to an understanding of the purpose and joy of giving and of thus having a part in God's great plan for boys and girls.

There will be some variety and changes in the verses used, the songs sung, the music played and even at times in the manner of receiving the offering. A group of the children may meet together to help in the planning of the offering service, selecting appropriate songs and verses. To change the regular plan often would serve to confuse small folk, but occasionally to use a different scheme, weighing them and trying to determine upon the most effective plan, would be permissible and even wise. We do not wish to be too formal in our

worship, and yet to a certain amount of formality, beauty, and dignity in the service of worship is attached a sense of importance and significance which too much informality might lessen. This applies to departmental worship. We can scarcely become too informal in our little class groups for worship there, for lessons, and for other expressional activities; but a little less of irrelevant conversation, a little more of reverence, can be expected and counted upon when there is a bit more of formality and dignity in the departmental worship service than is evidenced or desired in the class groups. Except in those schools using a separate room for each grade in charge of one teacher, the offering will be a part of a departmental worship service. It should be made a thing of beauty and of dignity, and yet characterized by simplicity. Verses such as the following may be used in this part of the service:

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father."

"Every man shall give as he is able."

"Freely ye have received, freely give."

"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son."

"It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Suitable songs are,

"Since My Heavenly Father Gives Me Everything," Offering Hymn.[6]

"Gifts of Love."[7]

"A Gift From Children."[8]

Offering.[9]

"Bless This Gift, Dear Father."[10]

[6] *Songs for Little People.*
[7] *A First Book in Hymns and Worship.*
[8] *Ibid.*
[9] *Ibid.*
[10] Louise M. Oglevee, *The Child's First Songs.*

For Discussion

1. As a training for primary children do you consider offerings of service more or less valuable than offerings of money? Give reasons for your opinion.

2. In training primary children to give to other boys and girls are there possibilities of developing in them a patronizing manner and attitude toward others? May these dangers be avoided? Suggest conversation, story, or song that may be found helpful at this point.

3. Do you consider the following statement true or false?—"It is a waste of time to explain to primary children the purpose and destination of their offering; moreover, children should not be thus burdened."

4. Suggest four worthy causes, in your community. Which, if any, of these do you think would appeal to the children in your department?

5. List several specific acts of service which a primary child can perform.

6. How would you go about deciding upon plans for a special Christmas or Thanksgiving offering? When would you begin making plans for these special service activities? In what way can you best enlist the interest and co-operation of your children?

7. What opportunities, as class teacher, have you found to motivate the offering? Do you feel that you can, in the small group, aid in helping children to become cheerful givers?

8. At what place in the program of worship would the offering service most suitably come? Give reasons for your answer.

9. Suggest several methods of conducting an offering service. If you have used any of these, which have you found to be most successful?

10. Do you think the offering of Mary Ellen's doll too great a sacrifice?

For Further Reading

The Training of Children in the Christian Family, Weigle, Chapter XI.
A Study of the Primary Child, Whitley, Chapter X.
The Missionary Education of Beginners, Moore.
The Meaning of Service, Fosdick, Chapters I, VIII.

CHAPTER X

WORSHIP THROUGHOUT THE WEEK

"His daily prayers must be expressed in his daily endeavors."[1]

The telephone was ringing. Mrs. Bowden answered it herself. "Yes, I should very much enjoy coming," she was saying. It was a call from Miss Howard, one of the teachers in the Vacation School—Billie's teacher, in fact. She had called to see if Mrs. Bowden cared to come the next morning to visit the Vacation School in her community, the school which her two children were attending. It had been on her mind for several days that she would like to see what the children, Billie and Harriett, were doing in Vacation School. It was an entirely new project for this community and the teachers and all those instrumental in the promotion of the school knew that a visit or two from the parents would convince them of the good the school could accomplish in the lives of the children.

Some Values of Vacation School Work

Meeting Each Day. As Mrs. Bowden with several other mothers lingered at the close of the session next day, the leader in charge of the group attempted to explain to the mothers some of the reasons why this school could become a great force in character education for the children who attended. She spoke of the values because of the opportunity to meet each day with the

[1] Edith E. Read Mumford. *The Dawn of Character in the Child.* Longmans, Green & Company, publishers. Used by permission.

group. It was thus a rather simple matter to carry over pieces of work begun the previous day.

Freedom and Spontaneity. There was also opportunity for freedom and spontaneity, and she had noticed greater possibilities in worship than she had realized were possible. "The genuine worship response," she said, "may not always be evoked according to a set schedule of time." There had been in the Vacation School much spontaneity and freedom in their prayer life. The class teachers also had noticed an informality in the small groups and a freedom of expression that had rather surprised them.

Abundance of Opportunities. Mrs. Bowden had herself spent much time as a teacher in the Primary Department. Here in this morning's visit she became particularly interested in the abundance of opportunities that arose, opportunities to work for right conduct which resulted from worship experiences. In their play they were learning to take turns, they were endeavoring to become cheerful givers, and were graciously giving up their own choice of a game to play, even with enthusiasm, a game chosen by another. They were trying to remember in the midst of play to be polite, and not to forget the rights and wishes of the other players, their friends.

The first-grade children were singing and trying to live out the new song they had just been taught, and which they frequently asked to sing:

"Friends, Friends, Friends,
I have some friends I love.
I love my friend, and he loves me,
I help my friend and he helps me.
Friends, Friends, Friends,
I have some friends I love.

"Friends, Friends, Friends,
I have some friends I love.
I share my games and share my toys,
With all my friends, both girls and boys.
Friends, Friends, Friends,
I have some friends I love."[2]

In their work period, they had talked together about what constitutes a happy work period. They had made their own standards of conduct. Suggestions had come from every one. Donald had suggested that to have a happy work period it would be necessary to "remember not to snatch things from anyone else." Bob said they must not crowd and push. Mary contributed the suggestion that they must always say such things as "Please, may I use your red crayon, Louise?" Alice then suggested that they must also say, "Thank you, Louise," when they lent a crayon. And other suggestions had come, and they had stopped right then to bow their heads and say "Thank you" to the Father for this opportunity to work together, and to ask his help in making it possible for them all to remember to do these things that would make a happy work period.

During the period it had seemed wise to bring up another problem for discussion. This grew out of a situation that had arisen in the group, and so together they discussed the question, "When is a thing mine, and when isn't it mine?" with a very happy and satisfactory outcome.

In the work period these boys and girls were learning to be the kind of children that can work happily and co-operatively together, because they were having a chance under careful supervision to live normally and naturally together for a few hours each day. We learn

[2] Elizabeth McE. Shields, *Worship and Conduct Songs*. The Presbyterian Publishing Society. Used by permission.

to co-operate by co-operating. They were learning to be folk that were comfortable to live with. They were trying to make everyone happy, and in so doing were learning one of the great secrets of happiness. Mrs. Bowden had enjoyed their singing, as they worked, the little work song:

"Sing while you're working,
Work while you sing,
All in time to music
Let your voices ring.
Sing while you're working,
Don't forget the song,
The day you are singing,
Work will not seem long."[3]

At the close of their work period they had bowed their heads and had sung prayerfully together,

"Help us to do the things we should,
To be to others kind and good,
In all our work and in our play
To grow more loving every day."[4]

Later in the day, after Billie and Harriett had gone to bed, each with a prayer of thanks to the kind heavenly Father for their happy day, Mrs. Bowden was reminded of a statement she had read somewhere to the effect that right conduct leads to worship as well as results from worship. She had seen it happen that day. "The child who has done right is in a position to have a more complete fellowship, a more genuine friendship with God as a result of having done his best," she thought. She had thought of worship experiences as leading to right actions but until to-day she had not

[3] *Song and Play for Children.* The Pilgrim Press, publishers. Used by permission.
[4] *Songs for Little People.*

realized that it works both ways. She felt that she could now go about her job as a mother a bit more understandingly, and she was grateful for the privilege she had had that day.

Mixed Groups. There is usually a somewhat mixed group in Vacation School. Many children who do not belong to any Sunday school attend often, as do those of various races. This provides occasion for the stressing of brotherhood in actual practice. It is a little easier to think we will be kind and friendly with someone of another nationality than to put this into actual practice. Sometimes we are kind in a condescending sort of fashion, and this we wish to avoid. Sometimes little girls in the primary group are "snobbish" and devote themselves to particular friends, and have not learned to go out of their way a bit to be kind to someone who may have less lovely dresses and bonnets than theirs, or someone who is unattractive physically. The Vacation School offers abundance of opportunity to learn the lessons of unselfishness and love and kindness toward strangers. The story of "Francesca's Friends"[5] has in it a lesson of great value and has been of benefit to hundreds of children. This conduct story portrays something of the life and loneliness of little Francesca, who had been in this country a short time and who had longed for school to open so that she could have friends. Imagine her bitter disappointment on the first day of school to find that the girls did not wish to be friends! Later, through her kindness in offering to share with another child who had forgotten lunch her own lunch, and her whole banana which she dearly loves, she wins the girls. She then draws lovely pictures which they admire, and she gives them all to the girls, saying,

[5] *Home Missionary Education*, Christian Board of Publication.

"They are all for you, all for you. I can make more at home." This story, aside from its lesson, is so brilliant, is such an appealing story, that the listeners are held almost spellbound, and the result is usually a greater consideration and kindness for all little strangers.

Outdoor Activities. There is time in Vacation School to see with the children some of the beauties of nature —the trees, the shrubs, the flowers—to enjoy with them the birds, and their songs, to visit the nearby lake, perhaps, and learn to appreciate together and be grateful for all the good and lovely gifts God has given us. We take time to talk about some of God's helpers, the milk man, the postman, the farmer who brings us the vegetables we need for our health, and many of the other folks upon whom we are so dependent. And so we find joy as together we consider the good gifts of God and man!

Occasions arise when we may do things for other people: perhaps we may go and sing for Teddy's grandmother, who is old and cannot ever get out to see the boys and girls; possibly we may make scrapbooks for the crippled and sick children in hospitals, or plan a party for the mothers and daddies who are doing so much for us all the time. As the room is decorated for the occasion, the invitations written, the cookies iced and all the favors made, there is a spirit of joy in the doing and the giving. This is an *offering* made to those we love best, and we pause frequently in the midst of these joyous preparations to thank the heavenly Father for the gift to us of mothers and fathers. We sing together prayerfully many times in the midst of these happy preparations: "For my home and friends I thank thee."[6] Or sometimes when someone has told us of

[6] *Songs for Little People.*

some especially lovely thing mother did for her yesterday, we just bow our heads a moment and sing,

"Father, we thank thee,
Father, we thank thee,
Father in heaven, we thank thee."[7]

Living Together. Of course there are lessons too, but just living naturally is the greatest lesson of all. Teaching lessons in an emotional setting so that not only the mind responds, but a child's whole being feels the thrill of fair play, honesty, and kindness to others, is an opportunity offered one who has a little group every day for several hours each day. As we lengthen the time on Sundays from one hour to two or three, we are approaching a program as natural, as spontaneous, as educational as the type of program partially described above. Since Sunday seems logically the day upon which our great thought and effort should be centered upon Christian character education for our boys and girls, it may be but a short time before our Sunday-school hour has lengthened into two or three, and then our work can become trebled in value. Just as a diamond weighing two whole carats is worth more than twice as much as a diamond of one carat, so do we find that the program of two hours can become of more than twice the worth of one hour. We have time only to make a good beginning in one hour, and then it is time to go. No wonder teachers and often pupils keep their hats on during Sunday school. They seem only to get there when the end of the session comes. (Perhaps we could forget how soon we are to leave, if we removed our hats and did not look as though we were ready any minute to go. There might develop a greater infor-

[7] Refrain of "Can a Little Child Like Me." The Century Co. Used by permission.

mality through this very simple change.) The one hour on Sunday will become two or three when we can come fully to recognize that the religious training of children is one of the most significant movements in modern education.

Even though we continue the traditional one hour on Sunday, much more can be made of that hour if children have the opportunity in summer for vacation school and during the rest of the year for work in the week-day church school. By giving children this privilege of religious training (sometimes on regular school time, and sometimes after school hours) once or twice a week, we are making advance steps; and they have more opportunity for practice in right living and in worship than when the extent of this training with other children is on Sunday only. To provide as many situations as possible for the expression of a child's worship feelings helps materially in the formation of worship habits. Since worship, to a great extent, is a social thing, it is well to provide many occasions when children may be members of a group of other worshipers. The week-day movement is helping at this point.

Some Values of the Week-Day School

Correlation With Sunday Program. In the week-day session there should be correlation to some extent with the Sunday program. This can easily be accomplished when the children are sent to their home churches. When several denominations unite for week-day work, the correlation may prove a more difficult matter. A time during the week provides for many excellent occasions for living naturally together, for the teaching of new songs, for the service activities, and for music appreciation for which there is all too little time on Sun-

day. Music can thus become more meaningful to the children and they can better worship through its use in the Sunday-school session or at some future time on a week day.

Few Interruptions. The week-day session offers comparatively few interruptions, interruptions of work which the children may have had only time enough to begin, but which must be cut short by the teacher or by soft chords upon a piano telling them they must put away that piece of work and do something else. Freedom from this sort of interference is one of the advantages in having more than one day a week, more than just Sunday for the big program of religious education. On a week day there are fewer interruptions of another sort—visitors who may have come out of idle curiosity and with little genuine understanding of and interest in primary folk. This sort of visitor sometimes proves a distraction to the small boys and girls and it is often difficult to keep the children more interested in their work than in the casual caller who has "just looked in for a moment to see what the little folk are doing."

Closely Graded Groups Possible. The fact that on a week day there can as a rule be closely graded groups is another real advantage of adding to our Sunday session the week-day school work. There is opportunity also for separation from other groups, often more so than on Sunday, when older groups are also needing space for classes. This provides more informality than do larger groupings and there can be developed more spontaneous prayers by individual children.

Continuity and Frequency of Training. If meeting more than one day a week, there is in week-day work the added benefit of frequency and continuity in train-

ing. Advantage of any opportunity in the class session work to move to worship should be eagerly and earnestly taken. Altogether, we find in the week-day session unusual opportunities for the genuine worship experience.

The Child in the Home

When we speak of worship we usually think of that formal thing which we do in a group, all of whom are trying to come a little nearer to God, trying to feel his presence through the use of prayer, song, offering, and Scripture. This is worship. It is definite, social worship, more or less formal, depending upon the particular group and the leaders. But worship in its biggest and broadest sense is more than a matter of song, Scripture, and prayer. These are materials that aid—they are the tools, the equipment in a sense. They help us, and are ways by means of which a worship experience may be expressed. Endeavoring to adjust oneself happily to trying circumstances, giving when we would rather take, dusting when we prefer to skate, tending the baby when we long to make doll clothes—these are the acid tests. To own up when we broke a dish, to tell the truth when prevarication might be to our advantage, to offer to go to the store so mother can rest—this is living as God wishes us to live. Loving, and giving, and serving, trying to be content with what we have, sharing cheerfully our toys and playthings, being kind to our pets and to all of our friends—these are ways in which the child every day can co-operate and learn to know and fellowship best with Him. Love for mother is more than merely telling her about it with caresses and words of love; it is helping with the dishes, setting the table, running on errands. Love for the Father and worship of him also means more than

mere externals, more than mere words. "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, . . . but he that doeth the will of my Father," said Jesus.

Opportunities Varied. In the home, the child finds these opportunities each day to share in the work of the heavenly Father. By being helpful and co-operative in his work, he comes to know the meaning of friendship with God. He is taught that God loves him, that he has expressed his love for him in many ways, by his good gifts, by his constant care, and by his greatest gift, Jesus, who has shown us how we best can show God that we too love him. This we do, not alone by telling God about it, not only by singing praises to him, but most of all as we share with him in his work. In the home, more than in Sunday school, week-day school, or more than in vacation school, does he find occasion for putting into practice this right living. In his every-day school, on the playground and in the homes he visits, come opportunities for loving service to others.

Making Adjustments. The transition that is made by the primary child from the prayers of the little child to the place where he makes his own prayers, and so consciously talks with God, is a problem for careful thought and study. The little child has, no doubt, been using very short verse prayers that he has learned, or else he has formulated exceedingly simple statements of his own. If he does not go beyond that point, he will probably feel that prayer is not a real or vital experience.

The church-school teacher as well as the parent has a great responsibility at this point. The child needs the same help in making this adjustment that he needed as a little child in beginning to pray. He must learn to become more genuinely thoughtful concerning what he

says, and he needs assistance in working out for himself a richer prayer life.

Occasionally primary children have worked out, for themselves, times and places and forms of worship, very satisfying to themselves. Perhaps in the home training parents could make more effort to develop this experience on the part of children. Primary children enjoy form and ceremony and are able to appreciate great prayers. Teachers in co-operation with parents may be able to help the child to have a genuinely rich, private prayer experience. As we plan for his worship through the week, we must endeavor to give much assistance in his private, devotional life.

The Teacher's Privilege. Many of the homes from which our church-school children come unfortunately do not offer to the children in them sufficient helps along the line of worship. The teachers in the Sunday school, the week-day school and the vacation school should become sufficiently familiar with the home surroundings of their pupils to be able to serve where service is needed. The teacher should think of the child in terms of his home life. It is not so much what the parents actually say to their children as their ideal of life that the children understand. So, often, if we better understood the home environment, we could deal so much more wisely and helpfully with John or Mary or Howard. It is the business of the child's church-school teacher to provide what she can of spiritual nourishment for all of the children, but to the poor, starved boys and girls whose homes offer them nothing in the way of religious enrichment she owes a special debt. These children need a good deal of individual attention, and through visits to the homes, she may be able to accomplish some things. A teacher needs to be very

tactful in her approach to the parents, but having won their co-operation, there is much the average parent willingly will do. When parents and teachers become acquainted each with the work done by the other, when they understand each other and each understands the child, great benefits may come and the child, even the one who has little or no background of uplifting influence, begins to develop religiously and his character growth is stimulated.

Home Week. Through letters sent to the homes, the parents learn how best they may co-operate with the school. There is a certain amount of home work given the primary child, and the parents, if they know about this work, and understand the purpose of it, are more willing and capable of helping. In the letter may be included suitable prayers and blessings for use in the home. The parents as well as the children often have to be helped to realize that religion is not a thing for Sunday only. With form prayers and blessings it is often easier for many parents to begin their assistance in the prayer life of every day.

Co-operation of Parents and Teachers

When it is possible to organize a Mother's Club or a Parent Teacher Association, it will be found that assistance may be given to both teachers and parents by their coming together. There are chances to get acquainted with each other and to become more familiar with the work of the church school, with methods of training the children in worship, with suitable worship materials for the home. Book reports are given, and often a parent's library of helpful books can gradually be procured. There may be a question box in charge of a competent mother or teacher. Outsiders are some-

times asked to speak before the group on such subjects as character education, the prayer life of a child, or Sunday in the home. Talks by mothers or teachers in regard to the most worthwhile pictures, music, story materials, books, or magazines may prove a fruitful field for such a gathering. Sometimes a primary song is taught to the group, or a talented mother may sing a group of songs suitable for children. Very simple and easily prepared refreshments may be served at the close, at which time mothers will enjoy discussing together or with the teacher some of their own individual problems. A group of mothers are never too tired to talk of Helen, Louise, and Billie and Robert, and compare happenings with other mothers whose children are of a similar age.

Through contacts with the homes and through reports of the children on Sunday, the church-school teacher may seek for continuity between Sunday and week day. On Sunday the class teacher or the superintendent may make suggestions for the child's devotional life for the following week. She should encourage the child in habits of worship for all the week, making him realize that worship is just as truly for Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday as it is for Sunday, that talking to God may be at bedtime or at any time during the day; that we worship God as we strive each day to co-operate with him by doing as he would have us do; that it does not end with merely talking to him and telling him "Thank you." We must show our thanks by the things we do.

God must be presented as an understanding God, one who knows our very thoughts, but one who is most pleased when we express our prayers in our daily endeavors.

Summary

When we think of worship throughout the week, we mean worship every single day of the week, Sunday and every other day. On Sunday we meet with many other worshipers, and sometimes on another day we may have that privilege. In the Sunday session the children usually meet in the big department group for worship, but also in the smaller class groups do we find occasion for genuine worship experiences of a rather definite character. The alert teacher takes advantage of any occasion that may arise to move from class activity to worship. By providing many situations for the expression of worship we are helping to inculcate habits of worship. These situations should be provided in the Sunday school, in week-day and vacation schools, and also in the homes. In order to aid children successfully on Sunday and every other day, we have to be capable of making the very most of each occasion as it presents itself, and, above all things else, the leaders must know, love, and understand children.

"Know you what it is to be a child? . . . It is to believe in love; to believe in loveliness; to believe in belief; it is to be so little that the elves can reach to whisper in your ear; it is to turn pumpkins into coaches and mice into horses, lowness into loftiness and nothing into everything, for each child has its own fairy godmother in its soul; it is to live in a nutshell and to count yourself the king of infinite space; it is to see a world in a grain of sand and heaven in a wild flower, hold infinity in the palm of your hand, and eternity in an hour."[8]

[8] Francis Thompson, 8th edition, Shelly. Burns Oates and Washbourne, Ltd., London, 28 Orchard St., W.1., 8–10 Paternoster Row, E.C.4. Used by permission.

For Discussion

1. Give illustrations from experiences with your own group showing:

(1) right conduct leading to worship,

(2) right conduct resulting from worship.

2. Mention some of the reasons why outdoor activities with primary groups may be valuable as a means of leading them into the spirit of worship.

3. In what ways may a primary teacher help her group in the formation of sound individual habits of prayer?

4. Outline a plan by means of which there may be better co-operation between teachers and parents in worship training of the children.

For Further Reading

Administering the Vacation Church School, J. S. Armentrout, Chapter III.
Child Life and Religious Education, Edna M. Bonser.
A First Primary Course for the Vacation School, Edith McDowell.
Child Types, Frances Weld Danielson.
The American Child, Elizabeth McCracken.

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